

Exploring the Experiences of Postgraduate Lesotho Students at Stellenbosch University

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the experiences of six international students who attended Stellenbosch University, a Historically White Institution, for their postgraduate studies. The six participants chosen for this study each had two or more years of experience as postgraduate students at this university. They completed their undergraduate studies at the National University of Lesotho. For these students, there was an expectation that they would have some knowledge and the skills to navigate their studies at a university in a foreign context. However, little is known about how international postgraduate students experience the institutional culture of a new foreign university. Not much research has focused on the experiences of postgraduate students from a predominantly black African country who attend a Historically White Institution in South Africa for their postgraduate studies only.

This qualitative study provides an interpretation and analysis of students' experiences by responding to the question: How do postgraduate students from Lesotho experience their education at Stellenbosch University? Situated in the interpretive paradigm, the research explored the educational and non-education experiences of participants who completed their undergraduate degrees at The National University of Lesotho. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, and Yosso's (2005) notion of Community Cultural Wealth, this study shows how the participants draw on various forms of capital in order to navigate and mediate their postgraduate studying experience in an environment that is culturally dissonant to the previous university and home culture. Through purposive sampling, the students who were doing the Honours, Masters and PhD degrees were chosen from different faculties of SU. A focus group interview and individual in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with students in order to understand how they established their experiences at Stellenbosch University.

The study's findings showed that the challenges they experienced included difficulties in making friends, difficulties in keeping up with academic work due to cultural differences, learning to adapt to a different institutional culture, and language differences. Key to the students navigating and adapting to the culturally dissonant university field in which they found themselves was the support and assistance they received from the international office, as well as support from their family in Lesotho, and friends in Stellenbosch University. What this shows in relation to Bourdieu's notion of playing the game is that the students used their cultural capital strategically in an attempt to navigate the university, in consequence of which they were able to open a productive, if culturally challenging, educational path which secured their university success.

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Abbreviations

CCW- Community Cultural Wealth
CPUT- Cape Peninsula University of Technology
HWI- Historically White Institution
IBC- Institute of Business Consultancy
IEMS- Institute of Extra Mural Studies
LAC-Lesotho Agricultural College
LCE-Lesotho College of Education
LESA-SU-Lesotho Student Association-Stellenbosch University.
NMDS- National Manpower Development Secretariat
NUL- National University of Lesotho
NQF: National Qualifications Framework
PGIO- Postgraduate and International Office
SADC- South African Development Community
SAHC- South African High Commission
SAQA- South African
SU-Stellenbosch University
SUI- Stellenbosch University International
UJ- University of Johannesburg

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and background of the study

The movement of students across countries in search of better education has been going on for decades, but only became popular in South Africa after the 1994 democratic elections (Kishun, 2007). South Africa experienced political transformation post 1994, and one of the key aspects of the country that was transformed to better suit the country's new found freedom was the education system. Transformation in the education system included making educational institutions accessible to students who initially did not have access. Access was also given to students from other countries, especially those from the Southern African Development Community (Mapesela and Wilkinson, 2005:1238). South African universities became proactive in hosting students from other countries, making South Africa the leading African country in hosting international students on the African continent (IEASA, 2006). These students either come to these universities as undergraduate or postgraduate students, and the focus of this study is on students who move to a South African university as postgraduate students, having completed their undergraduate studies in their home country.

My interest in the study is based on my personal experience. I am a Lesotho native currently pursuing a postgraduate degree at Stellenbosch University (SU), and my entry and initial stay at SU was not as smooth as I had imagined when I left Lesotho. I have also noted, through formal and informal conversations with other postgraduate students who studied for an undergraduate degree in their home countries how difficult it is to permeate a new university, and how to live in a new place, try to make friends, while keeping up with the academic work.

I had imagined the move from Lesotho to SU to be filled with new and fun experiences, new friends, a home away from home. What my interview participants for this study and I experienced were feelings of frustration, alienation, cultural difference and constant feelings of inferiority, while still grappling with obtaining our degrees. Having been at a university before, my study participants and I had hoped that adapting to the new university would be easier, but

it was a hard and long process filled with alternating feelings of highs and lows. The difficulties were in making meaningful friendships, keeping up with academic work, and adapting to the university's way of operation.

1.2. Research Aim

The study explores how postgraduate students from Lesotho experience a foreign and predominantly Afrikaner environment of Stellenbosch University. This study concentrated on both academic and non-academic experiences of postgraduate students in order to understand how they manoeuvre and navigate the learning environment of higher education within a national and cultural context dissimilar to their context of undergraduate study.

The aim of the study is to investigate how the participants of the study live their day to day at SU, and how their experiences have affected their stay, and how in light of their experiences, they have been able to make a home for themselves in a university where they do not feel at home. This study also aims to show that not all students are the same, and the successful stay of foreign students at the university would be promoted by the university recognising their differences, and acknowledging them. It also aims to show that these students' desire to succeed and their own upbringing and cultural resources has played a big role in shaping their experiences and practices at SU.

1.2.1. Research objectives

- To understand how students negotiate their non-educational experiences in Stellenbosch University.
- To understand how students encounter their educational experiences at Stellenbosch University.
- To understand the way in which students encounter and navigate what they initially experienced at the university as an environment dissonant from their own educational background.

- To gain an understanding of how students succeed in their education in a culturally unfamiliar environment of Stellenbosch University.

1.3. Research question

The main research question guiding this study is:

- How do postgraduate students from Lesotho experience their education at Stellenbosch University?

1.3.1. Research sub-questions

- How do foreign national students from Lesotho encounter and navigate Stellenbosch University?
- How do postgraduate students from Lesotho experience and engage in their educational socialisation at Stellenbosch University?
- How do these Lesotho students engage in their learning practices at Stellenbosch University?

1.4. The research process

1.4.1. Research paradigm

This study is conducted based on the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm “is characterised by a concern for the individual” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2002:16). In the interpretive paradigm, the researcher aims to understand the phenomenon from the participants’ side, and to understand the world from participants’ experiences.

In this study, I, as the researcher, explored the experiences of the Lesotho postgraduate students using the interpretive paradigm, and the purpose was to understand their day-to-day experiences in a university whose culture is different to that of their home, and university where they studied for their undergraduate.

1.4.2. Research design and methodology

This study is a qualitative study that functions in the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative research is an inquiry that concentrates on how participants interpret and understand their experiences, it is also interested in understanding how participants view the world around them (Holloway, 1997). The aim of the researcher in a qualitative study is to understand how individuals view the social aspects of their lives and to “explore behavior, perspective and experiences of the people they study” (p. 1).

The aim of qualitative research is to hear the stories and interpretations of the experiences from the participants themselves, and the details that make up the stories. In qualitative research, the researcher tries to elicit thick descriptions, which helps them analyse and interpret the data using codes and themes rather than numerically.

1.4.3. Research Methods

The methods employed in conducting this study were semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which gave flexibility to participants as they narrated their experiences at SU.

A semi-structured interview gives autonomy to both the researcher and the participant. The researcher has the freedom to ask the questions, to prompt responses and guide the interview. The questions in a semi-structured interview are open-ended questions, which gives the participant freedom to guide the interview, moving the interview from one topic to the next one, still keeping the interview within the scope of the study (Olsen, 2011).

A focus group is a group interview, and usually consists of more than two participants who fit the criteria of the study. The aim of a focus group interview is to create a conversation of opposing and similar views between participants, with the aim of understanding participants' views on a phenomenon (Olsen, 2011).

1.4.4. Data Collection

The study consisted of six participants. Students who participated were from five out of the ten university faculties, and ranged from Honours to PhD students. The participants were chosen based on their role as postgraduate students from Lesotho who had completed their undergraduate studies at the NUL, and had come to SU to complete their postgraduate studies.

I first conducted a focus group with all six participants, where I asked generic and probing questions on how they experienced the university. Next, I conducted three individual interviews with each of the six participants. Each interview was based on the three sub-questions, and they were conducted consecutively, as a follow up to participants' focus group responses.

Constant comparative method of data analysis was used for this research. This is a step-by-step process whereby the researcher continuously analyses and compares data as it is gathered and puts it into specific codes (Holloway, 1997). In this kind of coding, the researcher looks at similar units of meaning to create categories, and if they do not exist anymore, a new category is created.

1.4.5. My positionality as researcher

As a qualitative researcher, It is important that one acknowledges their positionality in the study, and how it could affect the data collected. As Patton (2015) states, the social position of the researcher has an influence on the meaning and words of the participants, and issues like background, cross-cultural sensitivity and experience need to be acknowledged. As a postgraduate student from Lesotho myself, who only enrolled at Stellenbosch University for my postgraduate studies, I have insight into the kind of experiences student might elicit. I was aware of my personal involvement in the study by having students give me information that they assumed I would already know. I therefore asked probing questions, and repeatedly asked them to explain their answers to make sure I capture their experiences, and not assume I know what they might be referring to.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is Bourdieu's cultural capital and Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) to explore and understand the experiences of postgraduate Lesotho students at Stellenbosch University. Bourdieu's theory is based on the view that students have skills and knowledge that is learned in their cultural background, and this knowledge is useful and beneficial within the culture it is learned. Yosso (2005) challenges this theory by stating that there are other forms of capitals that hierarchical structures may not deem important, but are important in helping students successfully pursue their education. According to Yosso (2005), cultural capital is limited to how middle class families reproduce cultural capital, and ignores that there are strategies and forms of support that minority groups give their students to support their schooling.

1.6. Significance of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate and understand the experiences of postgraduate students hailing from Lesotho at Stellenbosch University. The significance of this study is that it provides an understanding of how they use their cultural capital in order to establish their educational practices in light of their encounters and experiences of the university. Yosso's (2005) alternative capitals allowed me to view what other skills and knowledge students applied in trying to fit into an institution that is culturally dissonant to their own. The study builds on studies by Maundeni (1999), Mapesela and Wilkinson (2008), Smith and Khawaja (2011), Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012), and Dominguez-Whitehead and Sing (2015) who proffer the view that international students experience psychological, academic, and cultural problems when enrolling at a university that is outside their country, and one of a different culture. Issues surrounding their adjustment also include language difference, financial constraints, and discrimination, while trying to figure out their academic work.

Few of the studies examined how postgraduate students, especially those who completed their undergraduate study in their home country experience the new university, a gap my study aims to fill. For these students, they have been orientated into a certain kind of institutional behaviour, which aligns with their culture, and moving to a new university would mean they have to unlearn their previous university culture, and learn the new one. In addition, because they are postgraduate students, they have the academic experience and knowledge which would help them figure out what is expected of them. With this study, I aim to show how the study participants experienced the university as newcomers to the culture and to the institution itself.

1.7. Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1 (this chapter) provided an overview of the study. This chapter contained the introduction and background of the study. It also presented the research aim, objectives, and the research question. In this chapter, I also introduced the research paradigm and methodology that the study employed, and concluded it by providing the structure that the study will take.

Chapter 2 is a discussion of the relevant literature. In this chapter, I discuss different authors views on internationalisation of higher education, and different experiences of international students in South African universities. Literature explored in this chapter shows how students coming from different parts of the world experience their studies in a different country, which informs my investigation later in the thesis as I try to understand the experiences of Lesotho postgraduate students at Stellenbosch University.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical framework used in the study. In this chapter, I discuss the theory of practice according to Bourdieu, and Community Cultural Wealth by Yosso (2005). I also discuss why these two theories are most applicable to a study that aims to understand the experiences of postgraduate students from Lesotho, who pursued their undergraduate study at a different university.

In chapter 4, I describe the research methodology, paradigm and methods used in the study. In this chapter, I provide a motivation for adopting an interpretive research paradigm for this qualitative study, and why I employed semi-structured interviews and focus groups and specific data collection methods.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are data presentation and interpretation chapters, and each of the three chapters is a response to each of the three sub-questions. The analysis of data in these three chapters is based on the three institutional domain that Basil Bernstein's proposes for the study of educational experiences in institutions. These domains, according to Bernstein, are the official, social and pedagogical domains. In chapter five, I first set up the context of the study by explaining the living and educational variances of Lesotho and Stellenbosch. I then give a brief biographic information on each of the six participants. Finally, I present and analyse the data obtained in the first round of interviews and focus group with the participants, which are based on students' experiences in the official domain of the university.

In chapter 6, I present and analyse data collected from the second round of interviews with students, and on the second part of questions in the focus group. This data focuses on the experiences of students in the social domain of the university.

In chapter 7, I present and analyse the data collected from the third round of interviews, and the final section of the focus group. In this chapter, data on how students experience the teaching and learning domain of the university is discussed.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter of the thesis and presents a discussion of the study's findings. This chapter provides an integrated explanation of how these students experience the university, and goes on to establish an educational path at the university.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

According to South Africa's education White Paper published in 1996, higher education in South Africa faces many challenges as it sets out to address the past inequalities and transform the higher education system. Transformation in higher education was aimed at rectifying the fragmented South African tertiary education system through the development and implementation of several policies that started more than 20 years ago. Thus, after the 1994 democratic elections, visible changes in South Africa's education system have been witnessed. Internationalisation is one dimension of such transformation. Sehoole (2006:1) explains that internationalisation is as old as higher education in South Africa. The internationalisation of South African higher education institutions in the democratic period has brought about a large flow of students from all over the world into the country, especially students from countries that make up the Southern African Development Community (SADC). These students were drawn to higher education institutions in South Africa because of proximity, cultural and linguistic links, and the quality of educational resources (Mapesela & Wilkinson, 2005; Kishun, 2006). According to Ramphela, Crush and McDonald (1999:5), "the use of English as a medium of instruction serves as an attraction for international students to enrol at South African Universities." This transformation is also witnessed in the change in the racial composition of the students, particularly the enrolment of black African students in historically white universities. This is attributed to several factors, which include the opening up of access of the historically white institutions to black students in the context of a new democratic dispensation (Mekoa, 2011:114).

This study aims to understand how postgraduate international students from Lesotho experience their education at Stellenbosch University, a university that is culturally and racially dissonant from their educational and cultural experiences in their home country. Travel for educational purposes has increased in recent years, and has increased the rate of internationalisation in South Africa. In addition, the post-apartheid era in South Africa has brought along many changes, including the need for universities to internationalise their student

intake. The literature review aims to highlight and discuss key aspects that will be covered in the study. I discuss both local and international literature on these aspects, including international students' adjustment, experiences and educational success in their university. It also includes discussion on internationalisation and its relation to globalisation, and international students' academic and non-academic experiences and adjustment. It is important to discuss internationalisation, as it is the basis of this study. The chapter considers the spaces of universities, how universities function as institutions in light of receiving international students, and how institutional behaviour affects the success of international students. I also go on to discuss how students navigate and take ownership of their studies in respect of their reception at their universities. The focus here is on how students navigate their campus membership, and how they strive to exist in what can be regarded as educational spaces that are culturally dissonant from their educational experiences in their home countries.

2.2. Internationalisation

Internationalisation is a complex and diverse phenomenon. Despite the increased use of the concept of internationalisation in higher education over the years, it does not have one single definition (Knight 2004). This global phenomenon is practiced by universities in many countries. For some, internationalisation of higher education refers to the integration of an international or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of an institution, (De Wit 1999:2, Knight 2004:2). For Osborne (2002), internationalisation takes place when students and staff come together from different places, and when an international approach is taken when it comes to higher education. Chimucheka (2012:223) who states that internationalisation recognises and respects differences and traditions between nations shares this view. Guo and Chase (2011: 305) explain that internationalisation represents the positive exchange of ideas and people. Altbach (2002:30) views internationalisation as specific policies and initiatives of countries and individual academic institutions or systems to deal with global trends. Cambridge and Thompson (2004), who share similar views, state that internationalisation strategies should be accepted and supported as an integral part of educational policies, with the aim of enriching the quality and relevance of education.

Internationalisation has been promoted in South Africa throughout the post-apartheid years via legislation and policies (Dzansi & Monnapula-Mapesela, 2012:30). South Africa's policy approach emphasises the importance of internationalisation and the recruitment of students from other countries, especially those from SADC countries (Mapesela and Wilkinson, 2005:1238; Cross and Johnson 2008:307), which will be discussed below. The National Plan on Higher Education (Department of Education 2001) proposes increased participation rates in higher education by recruiting students from the SADC countries as part of a SADC protocol on education. Due to this rapid growth of internationalisation, South Africa is now the foremost host to international students on the African continent (IEASA, 2006). It is also globally the eighth most popular destination for international students (Mello 2013).

As Altbach (1991) states, there are many reasons that lead to internationalisation. Altbach is of the view that students go to foreign countries for degrees because there is a perceived value placed on a degree obtained in a foreign country. He explains, "A degree from an industrialized country is a considerable advantage in the job market" (p. 310). Another reason international students move from their home country is a perceived promise of better opportunities in another country. These students move from their home country with hope that another country will have more to offer them than their home country.

2.2.1. Importance of internationalisation

After the first democratic elections in South Africa, universities experienced a great deal of internationalisation, with a total of over 53 000 foreign students in 2006; 67 per cent of whom were from African countries, and this can be attributed to the increasing necessity for a university degree in these countries (Du Plessis & Fourie 2011). Kishun (2006) explains the value placed on internationalisation of higher education, and gives reasons why that is the case, which include the increasing communication and respect between people of different cultures, advancing the purposes of learning and scholarships, facilitating international relations and enhancing leadership in a global community. The rate of internationalisation has been

increasing during recent years. It has proven to be of great benefit, not only to students who embark on the journey but to their host country and to their home country.

Guo and Chase (2011:306) state that international graduate students play an important role in producing and distributing knowledge in universities, and they are contributors of substantial amounts of money through their tuition. Foreign students not only contribute to the economy of their host country through their high tuition, they also contribute to local economy directly through their expenditure on rent and food, and indirectly through their continuing economic relationships after they return home (Altbach, 1991:315).

Guo and Chase (2011:306) also state that internationalisation strengthens the relationship between and among countries, that increases as students and staff move between countries. Smith and Khawaja (2011:700) explain that these students are a valuable financial asset to their respective universities, and their wide range of knowledge makes them contributors to the intellectual capital of their host country. Studying abroad provides students with a global outlook and promotes relations between countries (Maundeni: 1999). Internationalisation helps develop respect for cultural diversity and raise awareness about global issues. As Guo and Chase (2011:314) put it, internationalisation promotes *transnational learning experience*. This they describe as the ability for international students to bring with them tremendous knowledge and experience through discussions that are educational to other students.

According to Knight (2004), internationalisation at the institutional level has been promoted as a way to achieve international academic standard for branding purposes, enhance the international and intercultural understanding and skills for students and staff and generate alternative sources of income. Knight also suggests that internationalisation is used in institutions to develop international strategic alliances, and foster international collaboration in research and knowledge production. In South Africa, this is the case where historically white universities including the University of Cape Town (UCT), University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and Stellenbosch University (SU), have prioritised internationalisation, and have proceeded in a relatively organised manner. These universities had set up an international office and had

strategic plans from as early as 2001 (Rouhani 2007). These institutions were proactive in internationalising, and used internationalisation as a tool to assist them in becoming more globally competitive world-class universities. According to Mello (2013:405), although students have their own personal reasons to attend foreign universities, universities also internationalise due to pressing needs, and the biggest one is their need for survival and competition with other universities.

Internationalisation is beneficial to the host country because some international students choose to remain in a country and contribute to meeting the shortage of skills in the country's workforce (Du Plessis and Fourie 2011:461, Smith and Khawaja 2011: 700), what Kishun 2007(460) terms as *global labour mobility*, while Altbach (1991:316) refers to this phenomenon as *brain drain*. Haigh (2008) suggest that internationalisation is an attempt to improve the ability of a student to study or of a worker to work, interact and communicate with ease in a new multicultural environment as well as their ability to appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity in host countries. Haigh (2008) highlight that internationalisation promotes *planetary citizenship*, which provides students with the knowledge of themselves and that of people from other nationalities. Planetary citizenship refers to either those people who can easily move across national borders to establish livelihoods in new countries or those people who live their lives in many countries. If students and workers can become *planetary citizens*, the argument goes then that *global labour mobility* is achieved easily.

2.2.2. Internationalisation vs globalisation

Altbach and Knight (2007) and Rouhani (2007) state that internationalisation is an ongoing process that is a response to globalisation and it should not be mistaken for globalisation itself, instead, it is because of globalisation that internationalisation has come to prominence. Knight (2003) states "internationalisation is changing the world of education while globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation." Neale-Shutte and Fourie (2006:121) are of the same view and go on to define the two concepts as follows:

Globalisation refers to the economic, political and cultural processes whereby the world does not have borders, it becomes a global village and it is supported by communication resolutions of the mass media and the internet. Globalisation unlike internationalisation, does not respect boundaries, it is not dependent on willing participation and has slowly led to a diminishing role of nation-states in the affairs of the world. Internationalisation on the other hand, entails a complex process of an institutions' engagement with other (international) institutions for academic, cultural, political and economic reasons.

Guo and Chase (2011: 305) state further that globalisation is only concerned with the pursuit of economic growth, competitiveness and profitability, and as a result, works against the higher ideals of global citizenship that are promoted by internationalisation.

2.2.3. The experiences and adjustment issues of international students

As a country, South Africa faces extreme socio-political and financial issues, and since schools and universities are not isolated from the wider country, these issues affect all institutions in some way. Crossing cultures can be a rewarding and stimulating adventure, and it can also be a stressful and bewildering experience (Ward, Bochner & Furnham 2001: 1). In this section, I look at international students and their educational and non-educational experiences in a foreign country. I also discuss the adjustment concerns of international students, issues that affect their stay, and what measures these students take in attempting to fit in and belong in their institutions of study.

According to Ramphele, *et al* (1999) international students are students who are not South African citizens, permanent residents or do not have diplomatic exemption. Andrade (2006:134) refers to international students as “individuals enrolled in institutions of higher education who are on a temporary student visa”, and Coles and Swami (2012:87) state that these students travel from their own country for purposes of higher education. These students bring with them a wide range of knowledge and skills across many disciplines, therefore contributing to the

intellectual capital of their host country and potentially adding to their workforce. Ward *et al* (2001) draws on Klineberg and Hull (1979) to describe them as 'sojourners', which means students who are 'between-society culture travellers' (p. 4). As they put it, this label reflects the assumption that their stay is temporary, and that the travellers will return to their country of origin once the purpose of the visit is completed. Altbach (1991:305) defines foreign students as follows: "foreign students are the centre of a complex network of international academic relationships" (p. 91). As Altbach explains, these students are the human embodiments of a trend that is practiced worldwide, whose aim is to internationalise knowledge and research in an incorporated world economy.

Moving from one's home country to another country involves difficult processes. Students experience many different problems, depending on their place of origin and their place of study. Differences in culture is the top most noted, and other issues that include finances, language, and xenophobia follow. This study explores the experiences of international students in respect of their stay at their universities of choice. Some of the problems that affect the smooth running of teaching and learning of international students include difficulties with communication and finances (Mapesela and Wilkinson, 2005). Maundeni (1999: 28) explains that "some of the problems and concerns that affect students' adjustment to universities are: personal and psychological problems: academic problems; difficulties experienced in replacing a social network of family, neighbours and friends at a time when they are regarded as strangers and even intruders: concerns about political instability in their home countries and cultural differences." As Meko (2011) suggests, "Black African applicants and students from economically deprived backgrounds have generally not been able to afford the fees charged by universities" (p. 105). Mudhovozi (2011:293), however, contests the issue of financial constraints on the part of international students, stating that the low cost of tuition fees is in fact the reason why international students come to study in South Africa.

In a study conducted by Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) at the Central University of Technology, international students revealed their adjustment problems. Adjustment, according to Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela, describes the qualitative interaction between students

and their academic surroundings. Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) mentioned problems that international students face, problems that are associated with coming from countries outside South Africa, such as working restrictions, the insufficiency of funds to meet expenses and the high cost of living. Although these problems are not academic, they have a direct and adverse impact on academic success for students. The findings are similar to those of a study conducted by Mudhovozi (2011). Students revealed that the differences in their cultural values, norms, language against those of the university were key factors in their adjustment, and those problems include homesickness, language concerns, coping styles, academic concerns and fear of failure, to mention a few. This finding is also consistent with Smith and Khawaja (2011:702), who found that second language anxiety is a factor that sometimes leads to academic under-achievement and difficulties in socialising with fellow students. Students in this study also mentioned that the transitional challenges they face impact on their learning, and adjusting to the usage of another language is the cause.

Although there is a large number of international students in South Africa, from many different places in the world, their economic status is not the same. A substantial number of students face pressing financial concerns. Such students report issues ranging from: making ends meet, receiving money from their families back home (or the lack thereof), or sometimes refraining from asking family for money because they know of their family struggles back home. Students with financial problems sometimes take part-time jobs that are difficult to hold down in the face of work limitations imposed by the conditions of their study visas. The high cost of living goes hand in hand with the high cost of housing, which international students from poor countries experience. Chimucheka (2012:225), however, offers a contrasting view based on his study of Zimbabwean students, that these students specifically chose to study in South Africa because its universities are “accessible and has a relatively lower cost of living.”

Smith and Khawaja (2011:699) explain that language barriers and educational difficulties add on to what they refer to as *acculturative stress* that international students sometimes experience. Problems with language can be academic and non-academic, because these affect both the educational and non-educational progression of international students. As Meko

(2011:105) posits, “the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction by most of the Afrikaans-speaking universities has effectively closed off these universities to many black African applicants. Mekoja explains that historically Afrikaans medium universities are gradually moving towards the adoption of dual and parallel-medium instruction, but language remains a barrier in these institutions.

According to Cross and Johnson (2008:311), many international students opt to study in South Africa with the hope that they will enjoy the pleasures of a rainbow nation, where students of different races will be seen in groups of friends around campus. They state that the perfect non-racial harmony that they envisaged does not exist; instead, groupings along racial lines are the norm on campuses. This is inconsistent with a point made by Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) who state that transformation has brought about social groupings that never existed in universities; students of different ethnic backgrounds are seen in groups of friends (30). Dominguez-Whitehead and Sing (2015:77) state that the socio-political and economic issues facing South Africa and higher education in particular lead to international students’ experiencing adjustment problems. They highlight prejudice, discrimination and financial difficulties as issues that face South Africa as a whole, and are affecting international students. Dominguez-Whitehead and Sing (2015:81) go on to declare that “perceived cultural discrimination, verbal insults and physical assaults experienced by international students both inside and outside the university are prime examples that some of the problems faced by international students have less to do with their own adjustment, but more to do with their host society’s shortcomings.”

Dominguez-Whitehead and Sing (2015) corroborates findings in a study by Smith and Khawaja (2011:704) that international students experience a lot more prejudice and discrimination than local students do, and these experiences have a huge significance on their overall wellbeing. Findings from Smith and Khawaja (2011:704) also revealed that international students suffer discrimination in the form of direct verbal insults and feelings of inferiority. Chimucheka (2012:229) found that African international students suffer discrimination and xenophobia more than those from Europe and Asia, which Mello (2013) regards as an enormous hindrance to

internationalisation in South Africa. Cross and Johnson (2008:311) explain that xenophobia has major consequences for internationalisation. They point out that the high levels of xenophobia that exists is one of the issues that makes South Africa an intimidating society, which also negatively affects relations between South Africans and foreigners on university campuses.

Many students experience culture shock upon entry into a new country. Westwood and Barker (1990:253) compare culture shock to a roller coaster, where students feel they are in a pattern of valleys and peaks, in terms of which, feelings of excitement and interest could easily be followed by depression, disorientation and frustration. Mudhovozi (2011) states that culture shock is expressed in different ways, including homesickness, irritability, sadness, fear and frustration (203). Coles and Swami 2012:88 suggest that “[i]t has long been known that international students experience a good deal of stress on arrival in a new culture, and have a greater need for support than home students”. Foreign students experience a state of excitement, and then later endure moments of crisis, frustration and anxiety, before figuring out how to adjust and integrate into university life. (Ward *et al.*, 2001). Klineberg and Hull (1979:30) state that proper orientation for foreign sojourners is very important, as it would prepare them for not only university, but also the whole community or culture into which they will be introduced. They also state that a great deal of unhappiness will be reduced if students have a clear picture of what is expected of them at an academic level, an aspect they believe would reduce their experiences of anguish and anxiety that accompany culture shock.

There is no precise definition attached to what Al-Shariden and Goe (1998) and Wang (2004) refer to as *international student's adjustment problems*, however to shed light to these students' experiences, I discuss different definitions. Al-Shariden and Goe (1998:701), as quoted by Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) state that *adjustment problem* refers to students experiencing specific problems in a foreign place, or to the process by which students deal with or avoid some form of psychological stress. Maundeni (1999:28) states that “adjustment (in the context of their research) refers to the process whereby individuals enter into relationships with their physical or social environment”, while Wang (2004), suggests that the concept refers to strategies and processes through which international students avoid or overcome some form

of psychological and conceptual distress in their new educational environment. Ward *et al.* (2001) see it as “an active process of dealing with change rather than a noxious event” (xii). Coles and Swami (2012:87) state that the “adjustment process of an international student is a long, uneven and unending process of change.” Nonetheless, little is known about international students’ adjustment in South African universities. My study grapples with questions such as the following: how do they adapt to an institution substantially different from their own experiences in their home country, and where do they get support?

Despite the difference in the definitions above, what is of general agreement is that students’ adjustment is a transitional process that unfolds over time as the students learn to cope with pressures of the university environment. Maundeni (1999:28) states that adjustment can be positive, negative and / or mixed. If an individual’s relationship with the environment is harmonious or healthy, the individual is experiencing positive adjustment; if the relationship is not harmonious, the individual is experiencing negative adjustment. Maundeni (28) states, however, that in reality, it is not easy to draw the line between these two types of experiences, “an individual may experience positive adjustment in some aspects of his life and negative adjustment in some. When that happens, then an individual is said to be experiencing mixed adjustment”.

Coles and Swami (2012:90) see university accommodation, clubs and societies as typical university structures that facilitate the process of sociocultural adjustment and provide international students with opportunities to lessen problems associated with adjustment. International students join clubs and societies because this helps them with meeting people who can assist them in dealing with their challenges in a new environment. They state, however, that international students still find it hard to interact with host nation students. Instead, students opt for support from their co-cultural mates, in other words, they connect with people from their own community, national or cultural context (Coles and Swami: 2012).

2.3. Institutional dimensions in relation to students experiences

2.3.1. Institutional culture

The chapter now goes on to discuss institutional dimensions with respect to foreign students' experiences at universities. It particularly focuses on the notion 'institutional culture' in reference to the university's reception dynamics that students experience throughout their university studies.

According to Higgins, (2013:115), institutional culture is seen as "the prevailing ethos - the deep-seated set of norms, assumptions and values that predominate and pervade most of the environment". Steyn and Zyl (2001:20), as quoted by Higgins (2013:116), refer to institutional culture as the "sum total" effects of the values, attitudes, styles of interaction, collective memories – the way of life of the university, known by those who work and study in the university environment, through their lived experiences."

According to Toma, Dubrow and Hartley (2005:6),

... at universities and colleges, institutional culture conveys a sense of identity (who we are), facilitates commitment (what we stand for), enhances stability (how we do things around here), guides sense making (how we understand events), and defines authority (who is influential).

Institutional *culture* and institutional *climate* are often used interchangeably, with the assumption that they are the same, when in fact these two concepts are different and explain different phenomenon. Mentz (2007), as quoted by Portnoi (2009:375), refers to institutional *culture* as specific situations, norms, values and communication styles and behaviour of staff set by management. Mentz indicates that culture is firmly established; therefore, it is not easily changed. Institutional *climate* on the other hand, according to Peterson and Spencer (1990), also quoted by Portnoi (2009), is the perception and understanding of staff and students of how the climate is like, it is about the unspoken reality of the institution. Mentz states that institutional

climate, in comparison to institutional *culture*, is more likely to fluctuate. As Portnoi puts it, “[institutional culture] is concerned with perceptions and attitudes rather than deeply held meanings, beliefs and practices” (p. 375). Institutional *climate* is discussed further in the next chapter.

It is important to have a strong institutional culture as it stimulates a sense of connectedness between members of staff and students in an institution (Toma, *et al.* 2005:1). As they put it, “[a] strong institutional culture yields the institutional identification and brand equity that encourages successful external relations (p. 2)”. Cross and Johnson (2008) state that the “[c]ampus environment ... produces feelings of alienation, hostility, social isolation and invisibility and can hinder the recruitment of new students, their social adjustments and retention as well as satisfaction rates and graduation rates” (p. 303). Institutional culture is very important in the recruitment of international students, because it affects the non-academic elements of such students. According to Jansen (2004), it is important for universities to create an inclusive institutional culture in which students from different backgrounds will ‘feel at home’ (p. 7). Findings on a study conducted by Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson and Covarrubias (2012:1192) illustrate that American universities function on middle and upper class cultural norms, which promote an invisible disadvantage for students, which make it difficult for working class students to transition into and function in universities. They use the notion of *cultural mismatch* to show that students from American working class backgrounds experience a form of discomfort at universities; they find tasks difficult to do, and therefore perform poorly in assigned tasks. Ancis, Sedlaceck and Mohr (2000:180) state, “students of colour enrolled at predominantly [w]hite universities ...experience lack of support and an unwelcoming academic climate.”

Owens (1991), as cited by Van der Weisthuizen and De Bruyn (2002:123), defines (organisational) culture in an institution as “the shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms that knit a community together”. Owens points out that institutions use mechanisms, rituals and symbols to influence and control the behaviour of its occupants to fit its culture. Owens also points out that understanding these

rituals is important for students, as it makes it easier for them to understand the institutional culture. He suggests that institutional culture is a critical factor in student behaviour and achievement, and to the learning and development of students. It is important for students from all kinds of cultures to know exactly how their institutions culture functions, as it makes it easier for them to co-exist with other members of their campus.

Ingram (2009:424) discusses the institutional habitus, which he describes as a system of lasting, similar dispositions. Ingram (2009) posits that just like an individual's habitus, institutional habitus is a product of historical, social and cultural actions and interactions within the institution. Ingram states that the school's history and experiences as well as its pupils and staff (past and present) play a part in the evolving habitus, and therefore makes the culture of the school. The school imparts its habitus to its members, which reinforces its institutional habitus rather than transform it, which leads to students' conformity to the status quo.

2.3.2. Institutional culture and cultural misrecognition

As student intake at universities continues to diversify, the question of how the institutional culture affects students from different cultural backgrounds gains urgency. Literature shows that students from different cultural backgrounds do not get recognition in institutions.

Misrecognition is a widely discussed term, but for the sake of this study, we will look at only two definitions. Fraser (2008:58) states that:

To be misrecognised, is not simply to be thought ill of, looked down on, or devalued in others' conscious attitudes or mental beliefs. It is rather to be denied the status of a full partner in social interaction and prevented from participating as a peer in social life -not as a consequence of a distributive inequity [...] but rather as a consequence of institutionalised patterns of interpretation and evaluation that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect and esteem.

Bourdieu refers to misrecognition as processes and situations in terms of which power relations are perceived, “not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder” (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p. xiii). According to Fraser (2008), cultural injustices occur when institutionalised or hierarchical patterns of cultural value generate misrecognition or status inequality for particular social groups. And according to Bourdieu, misrecognition is the way processes and structures in society function to legitimise unequal power relations, and present these as acceptable, while Fraser’s use of misrecognition refers to how processes of inequality that are produced in society and institutions discriminate against specific groups such as foreign students, students of different racial or ethnic groups.

Thompson and Yar (2011) make a clear distinction between misrecognition and non-recognition, two terms that are often used interchangeably. They explain that misrecognition entails distorted or partial recognition, while non-recognition is the “absolute refusal to acknowledge the existence of the other as a human subject” (p. 172). When students come to an institution, they bring with them different norms, meanings and assumptions, norms that describe their culture and who they are, based on their cultural background. Students from cultural backgrounds that are different from one that the institution functions within, find it hard to operate in such an institution. Their cultures are misrecognised. Honneth (1995: x) in support of this, states “members of marginalised and subaltern groups have been systematically denied recognition for the worth of their culture or way of life”. Cultural misrecognition happens consciously and unconsciously, and it happens due to not taking into consideration the next person’s culture. When cultural misrecognition occurs, inequality among students of different cultures is fuelled, and when that happens, the minority students’ stress levels increase, and their comfort in that place decreases, that is when students feel that ‘they do not belong’ in that particular institution.

According to Fabretti (2015:25), institutional misrecognition operates less visibly or openly, because it is not some form of harsh and conflictual refusal, but rather a soft and silent marginalisation. Those who are misrecognised find that people are usually kind to them and that life goes on as if everything is normal. The victims often feel disoriented and abandoned,

“as if [they] do not exist in the eyes of the institution, like [they] are a foreign body, not part of the institution’s official life”. Fabretti (2015:25) states that a participant in their study “perceived a lack of consideration, a lack of inclusion, and a lack of involvement. This is what is meant by ‘misrecognition’”. A person may be present, but they are invisible to the institution. The group that is misrecognised feel invisible and inaudible, and they want to be recognised on their own terms, for who they are. As Thompson and Yar (2011:3) posits, this particular group feels overlooked and unvalued, they want acknowledgment for the distinctive contribution they make at the university as students from a different country and culture.

According to Brandt (2012:582), “[m]isrecognition operates through a tacit acceptance of particular practices that are neither challenged, nor probed”. Taylor (1995:225) states that misrecognition can cause harm and oppression to the misrecognised group..., and can “imprison someone in a false distorted and reduced mode of being.” Ingram (2009) in her study of working class boys and their educational experiences shows that sometimes schools misrecognise working class culture and promote assimilation and acculturation, and ultimately spreads educational and social inequalities. Honneth (1995: xi) states that people need to be recognised for who and what they are so that they form integrated identities, identities that will make it easier for them to achieve self-realisation.

2.4. Individual experiences in a foreign university

This section of the chapter aims to explore how students experience campus life, and how they navigate and manoeuvre through the campus. I explain the skills and abilities needed by foreign students to survive a university campus that is culturally dissonant to what they know. I first discuss the notion of *background*, which explains the abilities that each person possesses, that are helpful when one encounters a new environment.

In their discussion of *background*, Broekman and Pendlebury (2002:291) *explain* that background consists of skills, abilities, pre-intentional assumptions, attitudes, practices, capabilities, stances, perceptions and actions that individuals carry from one environment to

another. *Background* facilitates certain kinds of readiness and exposes one to different kinds of behaviour. It can either enable or constrain one's intentions, how one interprets actions and the world around one. Background as an asset is individually constructed and owned. In this context, students from different backgrounds (race, ethnicity, nationality) experience membership of campus life differently, and use their background to negotiate their campus membership.

Cross and Johnson (2008), drawing on Woolcock and Narayan's (2000:230) concepts of *bonding, linking and bridging* to describe how international students negotiate their new university spaces thus:

Bonding: building connections with people who are like you. It describes how students with similar backgrounds build connections among themselves that can lead to student organisations. Students get into this kind of relationships as a way of re-affirming their identities. They also build such bonds because they find building relationships with people like them (culturally, socially) much easier.

Bridging: building connections with people who are not like you. This provides one with a channel to move ahead. Students get into such friendships with local nationals because it promises acceptance and mobility. They associate themselves with people who are familiar with the surrounding, which makes it is easier for them to learn the mode of operation.

Linking: creating connections with people in positions of power, which can provide access to resources.

Cross and Johnson state that students tend to socialise more with people from the same background, with whom they have something in common (bonding) (p. 318). Mudhovozi (2011) refers to the importance of *peer networks* in these processes. According to him, international students rely on peer support for the adjustment process, and this is because supportive social relationships are critical to their psychological and academic adaptation (p. 295). Peer support

provides students with a sense of belonging, which may have a positive impact on student retention, and learning achievements. Mudhovozi (2011) also states that these students depend on the support of their family, regardless of the physical distance. Some students are dependent on communication, using the latest technology to communicate daily with their families.

Ward *et al* (2001) describe international students' friendship networks, which students use to survive in their host country. As they put it, international students belong to three distinct social networks, each serving a particular psychological function. The primary network is that of bonds with fellow patriots, and the function of this is to "rehearse, express and affirm culture-of-origin values" (p. 146). The second network consists of links with host nationals, and its function is to facilitate the academic and professional aims of students. These relationships are made with fellow students, teachers and university bureaucrats, and it is usually formal than personal. The third network consists of friendships with other foreign students. This network is largely recreational, and provides students with mutual social support based on shared foreignness.

2.4.1. Cultural identity

In this section, I look into aspects of identity and culture, and how they interrelate, and how one's identity is formed racially rather than culturally in social spaces. Culture can be defined as the way in which groups of people live and work, and it determines how individuals react towards others, and how they relate to their surroundings. Looking into cultural identity will help me understand students as individuals and what informs their personal being, and how a foreign surrounding affects their identity. It is important to look into identity and culture as the relationship between the two concepts informs people's individuality and common characteristics, which they share with members of their community. Such characteristics prove one's uniqueness, and help one shape one's stance in a social space that is different to one's everyday surrounding.

A UNESCO report (1970:5) on race states that “the long-standing confusion between race and culture has produced fertile soil for the development of racism, at once a creed and an emotional attitude.” Apartheid has played a big role in South African citizens’ position in society, it has also succeeded to draw a line of demarcation between race and culture, where people are constantly viewed and addressed based on their racial consciousness (Fataar, 2015:68). The apartheid regime created racial positions in societies, marking whites as the dominant group, and non-white races as the minority and subordinate to whites (Pithouse 2006: xi). Breaking free of Apartheid is proving to be hard, and Vandeyar (2012:237) states that this is because over 20 years after the fall of the Apartheid regime, South Africans are still categorised based on racial grouping. She further states that scholars in South Africa have written on the struggle against apartheid in black and white terms only, and have missed to portray a critical awareness of the racial-ethnic diversity that is South African society.

Identity is described as the fact of being, the uniqueness and difference that individuals have, because of their family values and the way they are brought up. As Brock and Tulasiewicz (1985:1) put it, disciplines including philosophy, psychology and sociology agree on defining identity as the uniqueness of a group, which is usually visible when in contact with other different groups. Identity is seen in actions performed consciously or unconsciously by a group to show its distinctiveness.

Culture, on the other hand, describes a system that informs the social activities of a nation or group of nationals. Aspects of culture are passed down generationally, and not through genetic inheritance, but through informal and formal ways of teaching and demonstrating. Culture is deeply embedded in a society, it is enduring and distinctive, and it provides identity and meaning for members of a society. According to Pretorius and le Roux (2009:104) culture refers to:

the universal, distinguishing characteristics, products, values, traditional customs, symbols and acquired aspects of a specific human society. Material culture includes

objects, arts and technology, while non-material culture refers to the language and symbols, knowledge skills and values.

Handwerker (2002) states that culture consists of the knowledge used by a group of people to live their lives the way they do. Teerikangas and Hawk (2002 as cited by Sosibo 2013:5) in agreement, states that culture is a worldview of a group and a means of communication and behavior patterns shared by the members of that group.

Appadurai (2004) discusses the importance of culture, especially in regards to development of a society. He explains that the ideas of the future and past of a community are embedded and nurtured in specific cultural milieu, and in strengthening culture, the poor could find the resources required to contest and alter the conditions of their poverty. According to him, the definition of culture covers a huge range of aspects, but his main concern is on cultures' "orientation to the future – that is almost never discussed explicitly" (p. 29). Different cultures that are found in a school influence the institutional culture, the same way institutional culture influences each individuals' culture.

Identity and culture go hand in hand, because culture influences how one identifies themselves, and how they one is distinctively identified in a diverse society. Cultural identity is a pattern of life witnessed in norms, values, attitudes and policies, which is lived within economic, social and cultural structures. Brock and Tulasiewicz (1985:3) continue to describe it as "a set of adaptations ranging from ethnicity, through religion, philosophy, social structure, privilege patterns and national consciousness, art and science to domestic practices, myths and language patterns acquired in different informal and formal ways." Cultural identity is shaped overtime, and is a result of continuous exposure to a certain culture.

As Kravetz (1985:289) in Brock and Tulasiewicz (1985) state, concepts of cultural identity are based on several factors, including race. They further state that acceptance of race may lead to attempts to define people racially, whereas cultural definitions are not linked simply to physical traits but also to ethnic and historical experiences and development. Although this

article is written for the development of the United States and the role played by the Blacks, it is rather relevant to my study today, where students in a university are addressed and seen as racial beings (Black) more than cultural beings (Basotho). In institutions of any kind, where there is a minority and majority group, the minority is faced with the challenge of conforming to the culture of the majority group. Weedon (2004:23) states that “in assimilation discourses, minorities are required to adapt culturally to the dominant culture” and they therefore have to become like the rest of the people. The group that is perceived as the minority is faced with the difficulty of adapting into the “pre-existing habits of being, either having to downplay their own cultural backgrounds or to express them awkwardly in moments of cultural ‘fetishisation’” Fataar (2015:70). Vandeyar (2012:236) revealed that immigrant students in her study faced the same difficulty, where they are addressed as “black students”, in everything they do, and the colour of their skin is attached to the way they behave, and the way they are addressed.

In addition to the above definitions on culture, Handwerker (2002) reveals that there are intracultural and intercultural variations. For the purpose of this study, I focus on the intercultural variation, which according to Handwerker (2002); manifest itself among people who are from different societies. Differences are seen in styles of negotiation, communication, expectations and structure. The structural variations mentioned above equate to cultural diversity. Sosibo (2013:6) states that in culturally diverse spaces such as schools, students live and exist in a culturally hybrid place. Students are therefore socialised in socio-cultural spaces that are different to what they know in terms of values, norms, beliefs and attitudes. In some instances, international students are able to copy hybrid identities by drawing upon multiple identity sources, some from their home cultures and others from their host culture (Xu 2015).

Hooks (1992:340) states that black people are compelled to assume the function of being invisible, to erase any trace of their subjectivity (during slavery) and racial apartheid, and conform to white culture, so that they are less threatening servants. They also learn to “wear the mask” and pretend to be comfortable in the face of white culture, and complain behind closed doors. Handwerker (2002:106) therefore states that if schools distinguish culture, which individuals embody, from cultures, which are embodied in different groups, it is possible to

accommodate the observation that individuals vary, make choices, and exert control over their lives.

2.4.2. Cultural adaptation

International students face challenges when they move from their birth countries to study in a foreign country as discussed above, and they are confronted with the challenge to adapt to their host country in order to achieve educational success. Students move to an institution that operates on certain norms, and has a specific culture and climate, within which they have to adapt, in order to survive.

International students, in trying to adapt and succeed in their education, opt for different tactics, that help them in adapting and fitting in their new space. Sehoole (2011) posits that student adjustment is a transitional process that unfolds over time as the student learns to cope with the exigencies of the university environment. The issue of language is core, as international students would have to learn their host country's language, so that they can communicate. Coulon (1993, in Cross and Johnson 2008:304), explains that "the mastery of institutional language presupposes a sort of 'cognitive consensus' about the...dominant set of values, rules, norms and beliefs that must be internalised or learnt, with reference to which agreement is reached about the meaning of social situations and practices." Cross and Johnson (2008) suggest that international students attempt to learn and master the institutional language, the set values and norms, which are deemed important in giving them a sense of campus climate.

Cross and Johnson (2008:311) identify a multi-layered structure of membership among students. This structure consists of three categories, which are as follows. The first category is of those students who are open to rules, codes norms and standards that characterise institutional life, who have adapted to them, and have the resources to negotiate their social and learning space. The second category is that of the 'survivors', and these are the kind of students who find campus life alienating and a threat to their identities, but associate themselves with campus life for survival. These students are the kind that have figured out what

is expected of them, and have found a way to negotiate their position in campus in order to become members of their campus, and ultimately to pull off their education. The third category comprises students who lack the resources to negotiate their identities in campus, who sometimes develop feelings of alienation and cultural displacement, withdrawal, isolation and marginalisation. These students sometimes say, "I don't belong here". Berry and Kim (1988) agree by focusing on immigrant students' adaptation and identity development processes. Berry and Kim introduces four sectors of adaptation, which are:

1. *Assimilation*: this is whereby students forsake their culture and adopt the dominant culture.
2. *Integration*: which is whereby the immigrant students maintain their own culture and adopts aspect of the dominant culture.
3. *Separation*: this is whereby students maintain their own culture and do not adopt that of the dominant group.
4. *Marginalisation*: this is whereby students neither adopt the dominant groups' culture nor do they maintain their own.

Cross and Johnson (2008) and Berry and Kim's (1988) outlining of processes of adaptation provide clues about the steps and processes foreign students go through in order to assimilate and belong in a foreign space. According to Vandeyar (2012), students, upon realisation that the culture of the university is different to their own, abandon their own culture, and adopt the host culture so that they have a sense of belonging and acceptance from the host nationals. This is done in different ways, including listening to different music, learning the language or even looking at how things are done, and copying them for their own use.

2.5. Conclusion

International students move into new spaces, and surroundings, where they usually live for months or years, and find themselves having to adjust and acquaint themselves with the norms and practices of such institutions. The literature review has focused on both local and international literature on internationalisation to show how it influences the adjustment,

experiences and educational success of international students. It has touched on the definition of the concept, and brought it home to Africa and particularly South Africa, to look at how international students in South African universities experience internationalisation, and how institutions have introduced and accepted internationalisation, and how to date, it is functioning in South African Universities. The university, through its institutional culture, has a role to play in the acculturation and adjustment of international students. I have also looked at the experiences of international students in their host country, their adjustment issues, and how they ultimately find their feet in their campus, and become members. I looked into cultural misrecognition of international students, with the aim of viewing how students who possess a culture that is different to that of their institution are misrecognised and ignored in their institutions. These students get into a campus that operates in a different way compared to what they have been exposed to, and over and above having to learn and succeed academically, they need to familiarise themselves with the institutional ethos. The final issue discussed was cultural adaptation, which details how students intermingle with the locals to survive in a foreign institution. The literature review enabled me to understand how international students encounter, navigate and experience their education in an environment that does not match their requirements as foreign students. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

3.1. Introduction

This section is a presentation and discussion of the conceptual framework of the study. The focus of the thesis is on how Lesotho postgraduate students navigate and encounter their new university, which is culturally different to their home country and previous university. I use the theoretical frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu and Tara Yosso, to provide a set of lenses to assist me in my attempt to understand these students' navigational strategies. I first discuss the notion of campus climate, and then go on to Bernstein's three domains (official, social and pedagogic domains) of educational life, which I use as a heuristic framework to organise my data in respect of the student's experiences as SU. These three domains also form the bases for the data presentation and interpretation chapters of the thesis, which are chapters five, six and seven. Thereafter, I discuss Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital, which I will use to analyse students' practices in and outside the university's borders. Although Bourdieu's theory is beneficial to understanding how practices in schools perpetuate the status quo, it does not address how working class groups succeed despite their marginalisation. I thus present Yosso's (2005) theory of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW), which I use as a lens to investigate where students from a community that is different from Stellenbosch University in terms of culture and racial denomination draw their strength to navigate and succeed in their studies. I use Yosso's theory to address the limitations of Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, to show that working class students do not only use cultural capital, but other social resources that exists to survive in an institution.

3.2. Campus Climate

The climate of an educational institution influences the learning and social outcomes of students, which make it important to understand what campus climate is. The notion of campus climate is important in that it provides an understanding of the atmospheric aspect of a field, which is discussed later in this chapter. Students come to institutions with different norms and practices, they also have a class dependent type of capital, and their success in an institution is somewhat reliant on the climate of the institution.

Campus climate constitutes the common patterns of institutional life of a particular environment and its members, and the perceptions and attitudes of members. In reference to schools, Vos, Van der Westhuizen and Mentz (2012:57) describe it as follows; “[s]chool climate is an overarching description of the climate in the school as [an] organisation.” They go on to explain that the climate of the school, which is similar to that of universities, is experienced by the teachers in their work environment, and by students in their learning environment, inside and outside of the classroom. Reid and Radhakrishnan (2003) draw on Naylor, Pritchard and Ilgen’s (1980) definition of climate, to describe climate as follows: “[t]he perception of an organisation’s climate is the result of a judgement process aggregating the evaluations an individual makes about his or her environment at different levels of observation. The concept of climate explains how environmental variables can affect psychological ones” (p. 264). As Hurtado *et al* (1999) describe it, the climate of a campus is measured by the perceptions, attitudes and the expectations within which the institution and its members are defined and characterised.

The terms ‘culture’ and ‘climate’ are often used interchangeably, but they are two distinct yet connected words. According to Glison and James (2002), climate comprises the perceptions, attitudes, experiences, behaviours and standards of an organisation. They explain that climate is defined as a measure of people’s attitudes about a phenomenon, their perceptions and experiences in an environment. Glison and James define culture as “...the normative beliefs and shared behavioural expectations in an organisational unit” (p. 770). In other words, culture is the underlying way of doing things by a particular group. Ryder and Mitchell (2013), in conjunction, states that the climate of an organisation, or school, is a result of culture.

Campus climate refers to the formal and informal environment of the university, where people learn, teach, work and live (Cross and Johnson 2008:303). It emphasises the importance of an institution in understanding its climate, and how a climate that contributes to the making or breaking of the university’s mission. Campus climate is not just based on personal experiences; it is also influenced by perceptions of how members are regarded on campus. Different racial groups experience campus climate differently, and difference in such experiences call for

intervention from authorities (Rankin & Reason 2005). Locks, Hurtado, Bowman and Oseguera (2008) state that “institutions require a better understanding of how the campus climate for diversity and intergroup relations play a role in student outcome” (p. 258). The connection between perceptions of campus climate and educational and social outcomes also suggests the importance of assessing campus climate for underrepresented groups in campuses.

Tonso (2006) writes about the climate and culture of a campus as a preferred way of life of that campus that is approved and promoted by the institution, and made visible by individuals' actions. Locks *et al* (2008), in a study of African American students in a historically white university, states: “...a poor racial campus climate can have a negative effect on students' ties to the academic and social arenas of college life” (p. 263). These authors indicate that minority students feel pressure from their white counterparts to conform to an encoded campus climate, and they encounter a negative reaction to their minority status, and a colour-blind ideology. As they suggest, negative racial campus climate can have side effects for minority groups. They further state that “[a] poor climate...with disrespectful actions by their peers and the institution lowers African American students' investment in remaining at the institution” (Locks *et al*, 2008:263).

Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) explain how campus climate for diversity is shaped. As they state, the environment of each campus is influenced by a historical legacy based on inclusion or exclusion of diverse groups, it is influenced also by structural diversity and by the representation of diverse groups in terms of numbers, and lastly by the nature of interactions among diverse groups. In a study they conducted on Latino students, they deduce that minority students perceive a hostile climate for diversity on campus, which makes it difficult for them to adjust academically, socially and emotionally. They also state that students find it hard to build a sense of attachment to the institution if they encounter a climate that is not conducive. Hurtado and Ponjuan state that one important step towards improving the campus climate is to increase the representation of people of colour on campuses.

3.3. Bernstein's intellectual fields and pedagogical identities

Using Bernstein's analysis of intellectual fields and pedagogical identities, the study looks into the important domains within which students navigate and negotiate their campus membership. These three domains of social mediation help in exploring students' constructs of self in institutions, and helps students in dealing with their sense of belonging, or the lack thereof. The domains are *official domain*, which comprises of the vision, mission, policies and rules of the school. The second one is the *pedagogical domain*, which includes discourses, strategies, teaching and learning activities. The last one is the *social domain*, which is mainly about the students' agency and positionality in the social arena of an institution. Cross and Johnson (2008) state that the relationship between these domains give rise to specific student experiences and identities in the field.

Bernstein's concept of domain is similar to Bourdieu's theory of field (discussed later in the chapter), which is a social space consisting of conflict, competition and a fight for recognition. In these domains, students from disadvantaged families are in a continuous battle for recognition by their fellow colleagues and other members of the domain. Beane and Apple (1995) advocate for democratic schools, where students as stakeholders have similar rights in the school, and can express their agency without feeling as if they do not belong in the school space. The three domains mentioned above all play an important role in each students' campus membership, more for other students than it can be imagined. Andrade (2006) states that all students have trouble in their first year at university, but there is twice the amount of pressure for international students. Zhou and Todman (2009) in talking about the adaptation and adjustment processes of international students, state that although educational (pedagogical) adaptation is important for students learning processes, it cannot be looked at in isolation from the general (official) adaptation and social aspects of their adaptation. The adjustment, adaptation and success of students in different domains is interrelated. Andrade (2006) describes adjustment as the fit between students and their academic environment, which determines their learning styles, their study habits and educational background.

3.3.1. The official domain

The official domain consists of the administrative realm of the university, which is the first point of contact for students as they get to the university. This domain includes the admissions office, residence management, faculty and administration staff and course coordinators, who play the role of university marketing team through how they treat and assist students who go to their offices for help. The response, support and assistance offered to students by this group of people as they apply and enquire about the university determines students' adjustment and acculturation processes.

Sovic (2009) states that planning accommodation carefully could promote good inter-cultural contact, and a formal conversation in the classroom if carefully coordinated, can lead to friendships between students, which taps into students' adjustment and acculturation in the social domain.

Goldberg (1998) states that the minority students express feelings of discrimination and ill-treatment from administration staff, which is different to their white counterparts. Students even state that "the lack of black faculty and administration staff affects their adjustment to the university adversely" (p. 10). Minority students state that having black and coloured staff members would provide positive role models and those members would understand their backgrounds and needs better than white staff members do.

3.3.2 The pedagogical domain

Andrade (2006) states that helping international students succeed in universities is the responsibility of institutions, and the university through its' staff must be proactive in giving their full commitment, and offering their full support and services. Zhou and Todman (2009) state that if a student is unable to cope and make friends in the social domain, that feeling is likely to interrupt and affect their academic participation. In the same way, if a student is struggling academically, they might consider friends as a hindrance to their academic success.

This domain includes the teaching and learning aspects of university life. Ramsay *et al.* (1999) as cited by Andrade (2006) states that international students at an Australian university had problems concerning lectures in terms of speed and vocabulary. The students concern was that either the teacher was too fast, or they used vocabulary that they are not familiar with, or used a language that students did not fully understand. Andrade (2006:134) refers to academic achievement as the “evidence of learning, which may be measured by a successful completion of course requirements and satisfactory academic standing or retention”.

Students report trouble and difficulty with comprehension due to the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. To some black students, Afrikaans is a third language, and learning in that language proves to be a hindrance in academic success. According to Goldberg (1998:22), students who experience linguistic exclusion feel no need to attend lectures, because they do not benefit from their attendance. When taught in a language that they do not understand (Afrikaans), learning does not take place. Language is an important tool in teaching, and it can cause many problems for students if they do not understand it. It affects their learning, the social life and administration issues. Students who do not understand the medium of instruction often feel let down by the university because despite stipulating English as their language preference they are still taught in Afrikaans (Goldberg 1998).

Jayakumar, Vue and Allen (2013) explain that “traditional schooling structures (including curricula, values and pedagogy) typically align with the needs of the dominant group, and these structures can conflict with and even be oppressive toward students of colour” (p. 555). They state that schooling practices that force students to abandon their own cultural traditions leave students feeling mediocre, and unconsciously reject schooling. They also state that the absence of black teachers and a more multicultural curriculum slows down the progression of black students in colleges

3.3.3. The social domain

This domain is inclusive of students' residences, clubs, societies and dining halls. The assumption is that, since students go to university to study, the pedagogic domain takes precedence, followed by the official domain, which is responsible for their administration, then lastly the social domain. As discussed in the literature review, the non-educational experiences of students, which they elicit through social activities, are important and should be studied when looking at the experiences of international students in a foreign country. The social domain is just as important in students' search for campus memberships as other domains. Sanday (1973 in Rosaldo, Lamphere & Bamberger 1974) refers to the social domain as the public domain where political and economic activities take place, which in turn impact on people.

The adjustment of international students in a foreign university is measured by feelings of loneliness and homesickness, and it affects their satisfaction and functionality within the social domain of the university. Coles and Swami (2012) state that student accommodation is a good space for students to meet and form friendships, making their stay and functionality in the social domain bearable. This means, if students do not feel welcome in their social domain, it is likely to affect them in the pedagogical domain, which will further affect their academic success. In a case study addressing racial and gender identity in a South African university, Dumiso (2004) states that universities need to do more to accommodate minority groups in residences, because there are students in these campuses that are non-white students in Historically White institutions.

Goldberg (1998:17) states that in a historically white university, minority students explain that the cafeteria is one of the social spaces where they experience racial segregation. Students expressed that the racial split is very visible, with groups of white students sitting on the far end of the black and coloured students. In his study, Dumiso (2004:42) notes that there is a racial division at SU. Dumiso observed this during rugby and football match days. As he states, during rugby, "white and coloured students watch it together. White students sit at the open area [of the cafeteria] and watch the match on the big screen, while coloured students occupy the left area and watch the smaller television". He further states that during football matches, no white

students are seen around the Neelsie [the cafeteria], only a large majority of black students and a small number of coloured students.

The university prospectus is one of the tools that informs the social life of the university, which students use to decide on how their life at university will be. Goldberg (1998) states that students' social life at historically white universities is not as students hope for when they decide to apply to such universities. Students express disappointment in the way things turn out, and envy for white students, who enjoy their stay at university. He states that "college experience is usually more negative for black students than for their white counterparts" (p. 31), and this is because most social activities are patterned for white students. Jayakumar *et al* (2013) in a study of African American students' success at colleges state that minority students' social presence is affected by a lack of cultural relevance in campuses.

3.4. Bourdieu's key concepts

Bourdieu's works shows that individuals draw on their habitus and capitals to navigate their way through different experiences. The aim here is to bring field, capital and habitus together and determine their significance in educational access and success, as Bourdieu (1984) noted that they all work together to generate practice, or social action.

The research will consider theory of practice which is summarised by Bourdieu as "[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice", which will be the building blocks for my aim to understand the experiences of postgraduate students from Lesotho who attend Stellenbosch University. This equation is broken down to mean that practice is a result of the relationship between ones' habitus and capital in an arena (field) (Grenfell 2008). He states that it is important that the three entities be studied together because they are interconnected, and they give a clear idea of the structure of social reproduction, which leads to social inequality. As Dumais (2002:45) writes, "studying cultural capital while ignoring habitus leaves Bourdieu's theoretical framework incomplete in its practical application. It is necessary to consider both one's resources (capital) and the orientation one has toward using those resources (habitus) to implement the model of

practice in the educational field in the way that Bourdieu intended.” In the same way, Grenfell states that to analyse habitus without analysing field is to “fetishize habitus, abstracting it from the very contexts which give it meaning and in which it works” (p. 61). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:96) in support of this, states that although these entities are independent, they cannot be studied in isolation. These concepts will help me explore the students’ dispositions and the educational and non-educational experiences in a ‘foreign’ university field and how they use such dispositions to navigate their way at the university.

3.4.1. Habitus

The concept of habitus is central to Bourdieu’s theory of practice. Habitus is forever bound to one’s history and therefore informs their future dispositions. It describes the values, the lifestyle and dispositions of a particular group or individual that one acquires through the activities and experiences of their daily life. We look at the notion of habitus to view how it is created through an interplay of an individual’s free will and their surroundings. We also explore habitus to view how postgraduate students use it to navigate and exist in their new university.

Habitus is a socialised norm or tendency that guides behaviour and thinking. Bourdieu (1998) states that a habitus is “a socialised body. A structured body, a body which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of the world -a field- which structures the perceptions of that world as well as action in that world.” Bourdieu goes on to describe habitus as “the kind of practical sense for what is to be done in a given situation-what in sports is called a ‘feel’ for the game”. Bourdieu (1984) describes habitus as “a cultural habitat which becomes internalised in the form of dispositions to act, think and feel in certain ways.” Bourdieu goes on to state that it is a set of culturally determined bodily dispositions that have no representative content and cannot pass through consciousness. Habitus is a property of society, individually or collectively, that “comprises a structured and structuring structure” (Bourdieu 1994:170). According to him, habitus is ‘structured’ by one’s past and present experiences, usually by family and close friends. Habitus is ‘structuring’ in that it shapes one’s present and future routine, and organises the perception of practises. It is a structure in that it

is systematic and not random and haphazard. Swartz (1997:106) in concurrence, suggests that habitus compels one to deal with the present and expect the future, based on their past experiences, because habitus provides a link between the past, present and future, and “animates the cognitive and experiential filters through which decisions are made” (Brar, 2016:57).

Habitus is the way society’s objective structures become deposited in someone in the form of lasting dispositions, and it is important to note that a habitus is embodied (Reay, 2004). Grenfell (2008) in support of this, states that habitus is strengthened by interactions within existing social networks. Usually, a working class child will grow up and get a working class job, and a middle class person will engage in middle class activities, yet there are no specific rules that command this. This is a result of habitus, which is deposited into an individual without formal education. As Grenfell (2008:50) puts it, it is how the “outer social and the inner self help to shape each other”. Dumais (2002:46) describes habitus as one’s disposition, which influences the actions that one takes. According to Dumais, habitus can be manifested in one’s physical deportment, such as the way one walks or talks. Habitus is generated in one’s position in the social structure.

Bourdieu (1984) states that individuals are not always consciously aware of their distinct habitus because it functions below the level of awareness, but sometimes become aware of it through conscious reflection, usually when they find themselves in alien environments. He argues that “lower classes are the least aware of how their social origin impacts their class mobility, because they have the least amount of information and awareness, due to their pre-existing marginalised position” (Brar 2016: 58). Bourdieu argues that people in impoverished communities are unable to tell how their habitus hinders or help in their social progression, because they generally have no knowledge of its existence. According to Zipin and Brennan (2006:335), when people’s lives migrate from their closed homes into a bigger community and institutions, that is when the habitus forms. In primary surroundings, children develop their primary habitus. When they move out of their primary homes into other places, and as they try to scaffold new information and dispositions onto the primary habitus, then secondary habitus

forms. They explain that when an individual encounters an unfamiliar field, the habitus transforms, hence the notion of primary and secondary habitus (Zipin and Brennan 2006).

Primary habitus includes the practices and norms that one acquires from her primary field. Secondary habitus is acquired from the second field to which they are exposed. One's habitus is able to adapt to different societal experiences and situations, and when this happens, a layer of habitus is added, resulting in primary and secondary habitus. Reay (2004) substantiates this by stating that when a habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar the result can bring change as well as disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty.

Habitus acts as a link between an individual and their society, and this Grenfell (2008:53) says is "because the experiences of one's life course may be unique in their particular contents, but are shared in terms of their structure with others of the same social class, ethnicity, nationality and so forth". Grenfell assumes that members of the same society share similar experiences in terms of relations and processes. He states that unique as people may be, they share certain forces that are social without planning or noticing it.

The field in which it functions influences how habitus works. The relationship between a field and individual habitus "provides the key for understanding practice" Grenfell (2008:57). In the case where ones' habitus is not aligned with the field with which it is exposed, one therefore feels like 'fish out of water' (Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2009), and declares that such fields are not for people like them. On the contrary, when one feels comfortable in a field, and are at ease with the surrounding and practices, then their habitus is in concurrence with the field.

3.4.2. Field

One's position in a field is a result of the capital they possess and the interaction with other members using their habitus. This section discusses the university as a turf in which individuals play and occupy, and how they allocate their dispositions in order to live and exist in that particular field.

A field is a setting or structure in which people and their societies are located. It is the location in which people with different cultural capitals meet, and where habitus operates. As Brar (2016) posits, field is “the particular setting or arena in which interaction and competition among individuals occur with respect to the appropriation of scarce resources” (p. 60). Field is the various social and institutional arenas in which people express and reproduce their dispositions. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:97) define field as “the setting in which practices take place; a network or a configuration of objective relations between positions.” As they suggest, fields are spaces in which dominant and subordinate groups struggle for control over resources; a social space that consists of interrelated and vertically differentiated positions. Every person’s position in the field is a result of interaction between the specific rules of the field, one’s habitus and capital. In the case of this study, we understand the university to be a different field to the homes of students. According to Swartz (1997:4), it is important to understand what field really is, as that gives a deeper understanding of Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and the way in which Bourdieu conceptualises relations between culture and social structures. Swartz (1997:117) defines a field as “an arena of production, circulation and appropriation of goods, services, knowledge, or status, and the competitive position held by actors in their struggle to accumulate and monopolize these different kinds of capital.”

Bourdieu (1998:34) introduces ‘field of power’, and he puts it as follows:

field of power is not a field like others. It is a space of the relations of force between the different kinds of capital or, precisely, between the agents who possess a sufficient amount of one of the different kinds of capital to be in a position to dominate the corresponding field.

Field of power makes it hard for participants who do not have the required cultural capital to function in that field, which is a possible case with these students. Grenfell (2008:68) asserts that a social field, unlike a football field, is not smoothed out for every player, and only players with the required capitals are at an advantage because the field depends on, and produces

more of the capital they possess. Playing in a field of power is difficult; more so if one does not possess the habitus that is in conjunction with the field in which they operate.

In this case, I attempt to understand Stellenbosch University to be a distinct social field in which these students exist. It is a field because it is a place where people of different cultures meet and co-exist with each other. Schools, for example, represent a field that has attitudinal and behavioural expectations that are unwritten and unclear but are unconsciously known and followed by the middle and upper class, making it difficult for working class students to succeed in the field, and this is because they do not know the expectations.

3.4.3. Capital

Economic and monetary capital is the currency used in an economic world, in the same way as cultural, social and symbolic capital are used in other fields where they are necessary. In this section, I discuss Bourdieu's concept of capital, which is used to buy individuals a place in society.

Bourdieu's use of the term *capital* has an economic strength to clarify social possessions such as ideas and beliefs. As he puts it, capital is "accumulated labour, which when appropriated on a private basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour" (Bourdieu 2011: p. 83). Capital is knowledge and values that one acquires from their family, friends and close social groups, and it is embedded in a person. According to Grenfell (2008), field is synonymous with status or position, and it refers to the resources that one brings to a particular field.

In a study that will look at people and their background, it is important to focus on capital because it sheds light on people's characters and emotional composition. According to Bourdieu (1997:178), "capital can be explained as material or financial property; all goods, material or symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare or worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation." As Bourdieu puts it, capital is the resources that individuals and groups possess, which helps them maintain or enhance their position in the

social hierarchy. Capital is currency that advantages the individuals and groups that possess it, and disadvantages those who do not possess it. Capital can be categorised into five classes, which are:

1. **Economic capital:** these are the financial resources and assets. These capitals either are in the form of cash, or can be convertible to money and assets.
2. **Symbolic capital:** involves the symbolic wealth worthy of being sought and processed. This capital is about recognition and status, and is seized when one of the capitals is converted to fame and honour.
3. **Social capital:** “the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992 :119). Social capital includes networks and contacts that one makes, and their behaviour in society. These include resources that link one to membership of a group, their affiliations, networks, family and cultural heritage.
4. **Emotional capital:** love and affection, expenditure of time, attention, care and concern for others. (Grenfell 2008, Czerniewicz & Brown 2014).
5. **Cultural capital:** dispositions of the mind and body, for example language, cultural preferences and skills, forms of knowledge and abilities (educational qualifications) that one acquires through being part of a certain social class. It includes artefacts, attitudes, beliefs, values and taste of an individual that differs from those of people from a different culture.

Bourdieu (1997) states that within the educational field, the most valuable form of capital is cultural capital because academic success is directly dependent on it. Bourdieu (1997)

describes cultural capital as a power resource, or a way for groups to remain dominant or gain status. Parents pass on their cultural capital in the form of internalised beliefs, modes of thinking and dispositions shared by members of their class to their children. These linguistic and cultural proficiencies of middle and upper class families become a symbolic form of capital, what we call *cultural capital* (Bourdieu 1998). He further argues that the cultural capital of the middle class has a higher status than that of the working class, amounting in school success being explained in relation to the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family than by individual talent and success (Swartz 1997). Yosso (2005) agrees with what Bourdieu says, but rather contends that there is no clear understanding from Bourdieu on how cultural and social networks of poor people are brought together in order to understand how they access their education (Norodien-Fataar 2016:188).

The capital of the Lesotho students is different from one that a typical (white Afrikaner) student at Stellenbosch University should function on, which means there could be cultural capital misalignment for these students. Cultural capital misalignment occurs when there is no smooth placement between different cultural capitals. This happens when students who possess one type of cultural capital come into an educational environment that functions on a different cultural capital. Lesotho students have left their home country to come for what they perceive to be a better education in Stellenbosch. This has required them to function within a different field, with a different cultural capital. These students often feel like “fish out of water” (Reay *et al* 2009) in this university because with their habitus, functioning in an unfamiliar field is difficult.

Grenfell (2008) states that capital has three forms, it is objectified, institutionalised and embodied. Objectified capital is the form that is tangible and is in transmittable goods, and is in material form. This includes art, museums, books etc. This form of capital one acquires by their use of economic capital or by receiving it directly from other people. Institutionalised capital is in the form of credentials, qualifications and education history. This form of capital is conventional and has legal value, giving its recipient a form of social status. An example of this form of capital could be education, which gives people upward mobility in societal hierarchy (Swartz 1997). Embodied capital is incorporated within an individual, as principles of

consciousness and physical features that include body language, intonation, showing affection, attitudes and preferences. The embodied form of capital is cultivated over time, and it is in-built and internalised in an individual. As Bourdieu states, these forms of capitals are intertwined and cannot function independent of the other.

Bourdieu *et al* (1998) state that families pass onto their children cultural values and class based practices, and a position in the social hierarchy, and therefore, capital is much more than inheritance of financial or material possessions. Schools function on the basis of a middle class capital, which every student is expected to possess for their success, and these institutions ignore the reality that the acquisition of cultural capital depends on what was passed on to someone by the family, which in turn, is largely dependent on social class. In the case of postgraduate students from Lesotho who are studying in Stellenbosch University, who come from a lower social class that is different from one that the university operates on, they are in a low position in the social hierarchy, which might interrupt how they learn and survive the field. Chances of winning in a social game are dependent on the form and amount of capital that individuals possess; therefore, the chances of postgraduate Lesotho students of thriving and surviving in such an institution are questionable. Grenfell (2008:88) states that the value of any capital is partly dependent on social recognition. He states that economic capital for example, is valuable because it gives one status and spending power.

Capital, as Bourdieu posits, functions as power over a field, and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest that capital does not exist or cannot function except in relation to a field. Bourdieu (1973:80) wrote “by doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of anyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant power.”

Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital is used to explain the reason behind disadvantaged and working class students’ low educational achievement in comparison to white middle class

students, who tend to perform better. The assumption here is that impoverished students do not have the necessary cultural capital for social mobility. I now look into Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth, who identifies cultural wealth in the form of capitals, that prove that working class students have knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts that they possess and utilise.

Each person's success and/failure is measured on the level of (cultural) capital they have inherited from their families. Even with students at a university, their level of success is measured based on the capital they bring with them to school from their individual families. When people come to a field with different cultural capital, the reception and way of life will differ, because that is influenced by what they know from their respective homes. The level of success is therefore dependent on whether the capital and habitus they possess is what is needed in the field with which they operate. In the case where students' capital and habitus is dissimilar with the school field, which is the case with working class students, students are marginalised and social inequality is promoted. According to Brar (2016), individuals enter a field with the hope of securing benefits and profits of such a field. He further states that there are aspects of an individual's cultural capital and habitus that might be valuable in their field, and the greater the overlap, the greater the chances of success.

3.5. Community Cultural Wealth (CCW)

Yosso (2005) acknowledges that education is an important tool towards change, but it simultaneously reproduces the status quo of inequality. She notes that dominant groups assume that impoverished people do not have the social and cultural capital that is required for social mobility, which causes schools to treat students from poor backgrounds as lacking in such fields, without realising that these students have other forms of capital that they utilise to survive oppressive surroundings. She therefore introduces different forms of capitals that students from impoverished backgrounds use to navigate and succeed in school.

The six capitals introduced by Yosso (2005) make up Community Cultural Wealth (CCW), which is the 'wealth' and resources owned and used by students in the absence of expected middle class cultural capital. This framework proves that students may not have the required capital in school, but they have other domestic practices that help them in navigating their presence in schools. I use Yosso's theory to address the deficiency in Bourdieu's theory, which identifies how privilege and status can be protected, and does not address how capitals that working-class students access within their own communities can help them survive. As Jayakumar, *et al* (2013) states, "[t]his limitation lends itself to problematic interpretation, where the underachievement of low-income students and students of colour is attributed to a lack of cultural capital" (p. 556).

CCW is defined as "the accumulated assets and resources found in the lives and histories of disadvantaged students" (Yosso, 2005:77). According to Yosso (2005), impoverished communities develop forms of capital, that are important in such communities, capitals that should be recognised in order to understand how students from poor communities' access and pull off their education. Yosso (2005: 82) challenges the traditional approaches that claim that working class students' cultural capital is not enough for their survival in schools. She instead states, "poor communities draw on their CCW in order to establish social and radical justice". Yosso states that over and above cultural capital, there are other forms of capital that poor communities possess, and these capitals should be recognised, to understand how students from poor communities' access and engage in their education. Moeller and Bielfeldt (2011:85) assert that these capitals are neither mutually exclusive nor static; they are rather dynamic processes that build on one another as part of Community Cultural Wealth.

According to Yosso (2005), students from impoverished families acquire these forms of capital from their society, and rely on them for survival. Students also draw strength from their families and community to survive and resist macro and micro forms of oppression. I use these capitals to argue that postgraduate students from Lesotho have other forms of capitals that they draw from for their successful stay at SU. Yosso outlines six such capitals, and those are *aspirational*,

linguistic, familial, social, navigational and resistant capitals, which students use as they navigate their educational field.

These capitals are described below.

1. **Aspirational capital** is summarised by the notion of resilience. It is the ability of students to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. This capital is seen in the way people from impoverished communities, despite their circumstances, still have dreams and hopes for the future, and their hope for attaining these dreams keeps them going. This capital is about anticipated possibilities beyond the experienced conditions as they represent “the creation of a history that would break the links between parents’ current occupational status and their children’s future academic attainment” (Gándara 1995, 55 in Nkambule 2014).
2. **Linguistic capital** includes the intellectual and the social skills that people get from communication with people in their community, in communicating in more than one language and/or style. This capital does not address spoken language only; it is also concerned with other forms of communication like storytelling, memorizing, facial affect, rhythm and rhyme. It also includes the ability to codeswitch, and to communicate using visual arts, music or poetry.
3. **Familial capital** refers to the kind of capital that is nurtured and attained among family and close kin, which carry a sort of community history and cultural instinct. This kind of capital reflects a certain commitment to community and how that particular community operates, and it expands from a closed family to the whole society. With this capital, isolation is minimised as families “become connected with others around common issues” and people come to realise that they are “not alone in dealing with their problems” (Yosso 2005:79).
4. **Social capital** can be understood as the networks of family, extended family and the larger community that gives one a sense of cultural belonging. This is seen in how the

society offers emotional support to their children as they pursue their studies. This capital is also seen in how communities and churches help students in their communities who are academically determined but do not have financial means.

5. **Navigational capital** includes the skills to manoeuvre through social entities that are clearly not made for disadvantaged groups. This form of capital helps minority groups in their pursuit for better lives, and they use it to find their way around an oppressive field. According to Yosso, the resilience that students of colour possess becomes the source of inner strength and resources in helping students survive, recover or even thrive after distressing situations. This capital consists of skills that students possess and use to respond to the hardships they encounter in schools. Yosso describes the need for students to develop navigational strategies in order to become successful within what she terms “racially hostile university campuses” (2005: 80). She further notes that students need to develop ‘academic invulnerability’ in order to “sustain high levels of achievement, despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly at school and, ultimately dropping out of school” (p. 80).
6. **Resistant capital** refers to the skills fostered through oppositional behaviour that challenges inequality, or defending oneself in the face of oppression. This kind of capital is due to the need to resist any form of oppression seen in communities of colour.

3.6. Conclusion

To summarise, this section has explained the theoretical framework that is explored by the study. With Bourdieu’s theories of field, habitus and capital, and Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth, the study aims to bring to the fore the educational and non-educational experiences of international students, their adjustment issues and how they eventually succeed in their education at a foreign university. This study concentrates on how postgraduate students from Lesotho navigate and succeed at a university that is culturally different to the university that they attended in their home country.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological dimensions of my study. It validates the importance of implementing a qualitative method to carry out the research. The use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups is appropriate and fitting to answer my research question and sub-questions. In this chapter, I first give a broad overview of the methodological paradigm within which the study will be conducted, then provide an explanation of the research design, methods and sampling procedure. The processes of data analysis, data presentation and interpretation will follow. In conclusion, the chapter will address the issue of ethics and ethical considerations pertaining to the study.

4.2. Methodological paradigm

I propose a descriptive study of the experiences of postgraduate students from Lesotho studying at Stellenbosch University, thus, this study employs a qualitative approach. Qualitative research “uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings” (Golafshani 2003:600), and as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) put it, it is the context-specific nature of qualitative research that leads to the full understanding of the subject matter. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), “qualitative research is a multimethod focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (p4).

Qualitative research is concerned with authenticity of human experience and subjectivity (Silverman 2013), and Maykut and Morehouse (1994) express that the qualitative researcher considers the *human-as-instrument* the best way to collect and analyse data. This implies that humans are flexible and emotional beings have the ability to do research that can probe their research subjects or interviewees in order to access and understand the complexity of human intent and behaviour. As Jensen and Laurie (2016:172) states, “qualitative research prioritises personal interpretations and meaning over such ideals such as objectivity and standardisation.”

Qualitative research is a human-focused methodology, and the aim of this kind of methodology is to dig deeper into the experiences of the participants, perceptions, their behaviours and beliefs. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials such as case studies, personal experience, introspective life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives. This approach explores the attitudes, behaviours and experiences through methods such as interviews and focus groups, and it is the right methodology to use in understanding and exploring the navigational strategies of Lesotho postgraduate students from their own explanations and stories.

Creswell (2007:42) states that qualitative research is conducted with the aim of addressing a problem or an issue. He further states that a researcher uses qualitative research to obtain a complex, detailed understanding of the issue, and to empower their participants to tell their stories. The role of the researcher is to listen to the voices of the participants, and allow them to share their stories without expectation to have the stories match the literature. As a qualitative researcher, it was my responsibility to understand the context or setting in which participants address their problem, which is what I hope to achieve with my study.

The intention in a qualitative research study is to approach the world 'out there', and to understand, describe and explain social phenomena from the inside in several ways, which include:

- analysing experiences of individuals and/or groups
- analysing interactions and communications in the making
- analysing documents. (Barbour 2007).

Morgan, Krueger and King (1998:12) assert, "qualitative researches are useful for exploration and discovery". What this means is that qualitative research methods are the best methods for interpretation, because they give an understanding of why things are the way they are and how

they came to be that way. This study will dig deep into students' educational background regarding their previous study at the National University of Lesotho (NUL), how they perceive themselves as Lesotho citizens (introspect), and how they experience, navigate and pull of their educational success at Stellenbosch University (describe routine and problematic moments).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011:19), a paradigm is "the net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises". This research will be conducted in the interpretive paradigm, and Connoles (1993) states that in the interpretive paradigm, the task of the researcher becomes that of understanding what is going on, *definition of the situation*, at least in the first instance. This paradigm is concerned with meaning and experiential knowledge. As a researcher in the interpretive paradigm, my responsibility is to understand participants and the world around them, and understand the way they narrate their stories. The interpretive paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individuals. The central concern of this paradigm "is to understand the subjective world of human existence" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002: 17). For this study, what this means is that as a researcher, I need to identify patterns of meaning which may emerge as participants relate their experiences of Stellenbosch University, and use these stories as a basis for developing understanding about the focus of my research.

As Creswell (2007:21) states "the researcher's intent, then, is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world. Therefore, qualitative research is often called 'interpretive' research". In the interpretive paradigm, meaning is the basis of data: meaning precedes logic and facts of information obtained. Observation is done through the social, linguistic and cognitive skills of the researcher. With interpretive research, the researcher makes sense of feelings, experiences, social situations or incidences on the real world, because meanings are the crux of findings. The researchers' task is to determine and report the senses individuals make of their social world, and to report what lies behind the ways they act. The task of the researcher is to capture the behaviour of the interviewee, and in doing so, "the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view" (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975:13-14). In doing this, the researcher should attempt to become more than just a

participant observer in the natural setting that is being investigated. They should also make a deliberate attempt to put themselves in the shoes of people they are observing and studying, and try to understand their actions, decisions, behaviour and practices from their perspectives.

Scott and Usher (1996) state that knowledge is not only concerned with generalization and prediction but with interpretation, meaning and illumination. Gubrium and Holstein (2002:488) state that interpretive research engages both the 'how's' and the 'what's' of social reality; it is centred both in how people methodologically construct their experiences and their worlds and in the configuration of meaning. With this research, the aim is to explore how each participant experiences the university, without generalisation and predicting based on literature that has been explored. The objective is to allow every participant to share their story in the interviews and unconstrained by what I expect to find based on the literature.

Information about students' experiences makes up the study and the meanings and utterances that students attach to their experiences are central to this research, and it is through qualitative research methods that such issues are adequately addressed.

4.3. Context of the study

The context within which this study takes place is Stellenbosch University, a Historically White Institution (HWI) in the Western Cape province of South Africa. SU is a university that previously catered mostly for White Afrikaans students, but has changed its intake over the years to accommodate students from all races, and students from other countries, through the Postgraduate and International Office (PGIO). The SU language Policy, despite being amended to suit different student's language preference, is still considered exclusionary to students who do not speak or understand Afrikaans. The Language Policy that was amended and passed in June 2016 sets out to promote "multilingualism by using the province's three official languages, namely Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa" (2016:2). The details are beyond the scope of this research study, but the issue of language is worth mentioning as it affects the field within which students live.

All participants who take part in this study are black students from Lesotho. They all came to SU as postgraduate students, and had undertaken their undergraduate study at the National University of Lesotho (NUL).

4.4. Data collection

Data collection includes choosing the criteria for research participant selection, a suitable strategy for sampling, and deciding on which methods to use in collecting data. I will discuss each below.

4.4.1. Research participant selection

Since this study is on the experiences of students hailing from Lesotho, who are enrolled at SU for their postgraduate studies, I aim to get student representation across all faculties. Students are required to have spent at least two years at the institution. This will ensure that the participants had sufficient time to build their experiences and talk about them.

4.4.2. Sampling

Data collection is a crucial part of research, because the data collected will contribute to better understanding the phenomenon, or to new knowledge. It is important therefore, to choose carefully the group of people, called *sample*, that will represent a larger grouping of which they are part; and this larger group is a *population*.

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of potential participants in such a way that the chosen group are a representative of the larger group from which they are selected. According to Arber, “the purpose of sampling is usually to study a representative subsection of a precisely defined population in order to make inferences about the whole population” (1993:38).

Purposive sampling technique, which is also called judgement sampling, is “the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses”, Tongco (2007:147), and it is ideal for interview method of data collection (Arber 1993). As Tongco (2007) states, in this non-random technique, the researcher considers what information is needed, then finds the people who have knowledge or experience on the subject matter who are willing to participate. According to Silverman (2013), purposive sampling gives the researcher an opportunity to choose a sample that elucidates the features and qualities that the researcher is interested in studying. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) state that with purposive sampling, the likelihood that many variables that are common in any social phenomenon will be represented is higher than it is in random sampling, “which tries to achieve variation through the use of random selection and large sample size” (p. 45).

There are a number of reasons that encouraged the use of this sampling technique. The first one was that the researcher believed that it is important to work with people who already know each other, making recruitment easier. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) state that working with people who are acquainted through working or living together, who normally discuss issues surrounding them, issues that are likely to be raised in a focus group research session, promises better data collection.

Secondly, purposive sampling is intentional, focused and purpose driven. The researcher chooses their sample based on what it is they wish to explore and understand; based on their relevance to the research question. This is further explored by Lincoln and Denzin (1994), who state that researchers choose purposive sampling instead of random sampling because the former gives them an opportunity to select groups or individuals, and surroundings where the “processes being studied are most likely to occur” (p. 202), while the latter is broad and non-selective.

As a postgraduate student from Lesotho, I knew potential participants, and personally approached them. I explained to them what the study is about, and how their responses will contribute to the study. The participants’ right to confidentiality and anonymity was explained

and assured by the researcher, and encouraged to ask questions for further clarification. I explained to the participants that there is no obligation to take part in the study, and that they are free to pull out of participating if the need arises.

4.4.3. Research Methods

Methods are tools used in collecting data (Dawson, 2009). Research methods that are used for a qualitative study are chosen to benefit the researcher in data collection and analysis, and to give the participants an opportunity to voice their perceptions, their attitudes and opinions. These methods aim to capture participants' language and behaviour. Because of the nature of the study, which is concerned with the experiences of postgraduate Lesotho students at Stellenbosch University, interviews and focus group methods are deemed appropriate to use. Through interviews and focus groups, the researcher can "gain direct, detailed insights into people's thinking, behaviour and relationships" Jansen and Laurie (2016:172).

4.4.4. Focus groups

My study uses focus groups as one of the data collection methods. According to Morgan *et.al.* (1998:1), "focus groups are group interviews." A focus group is a qualitative research method that uses a guided group discussion to generate a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs. Morgan *et al* (1998) further state that focus groups are important in obtaining views from a group of people about a chosen topic, and it is important to listen to the spoken and unspoken words.

Focus groups creates lines of communication, which both the participants and the researcher need to respect. They allow elicitation of opinions, perceptions and experiences in an interactional setting. The researcher chooses what needs to be discussed, and guides the participants in that discussion, but they should not be too controlling. Morgan *et al* put it as such, "it is *your* focus, but it is *their* group(s)". Kitzinger and Barbour (1999:4) and Silverman (2013:177) refer to focus group as group discussion whose aim is to explore a specific set of

issues. The group is 'focused' in that it involves a collective activity. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) also state that the main feature distinguishing focus groups from other group interviews is the explicit use of group interaction to generate data.

There are advantages attached to using focus groups. Focus groups are efficient in that a large number of people come together, and get to voice their opinions on a said topic at the same time, which saves both the participants and the researcher time. According to Calitz (2015:94), "focus groups offers participants an opportunity to share their biographies with the rest of the groups", which allows other members to comment and reflect on others responses, which lessens the impact of researcher bias (Dawson, 2009). Participants also have the freedom to share their experiences with peers who face similar and different challenges. Focus groups are efficient in that one participant can remember issues they might have forgotten from what other members say. Farquhar (1999) views focus groups as safe spaces where participants can come together and discuss taboo/sensitive topics, and participants may feel supported and empowered to discuss such issues in a space surrounded by friends or acquaintances.

Useful as focus groups are, there are challenges to using them. Given (2016:93) states that "[m]anaging group discussions can be difficult, particularly when some participants dominate the conversation". In addition to one participant dominating the discussion, there might be people who feel uncomfortable in a group setting, and become nervous about speaking. Time constraints is another challenge facing focus groups. People have different schedules, and it could be difficult to schedule a group of people to come together at a time that is convenient to everyone alike. Another issue facing focus groups is transcription of the data collected. Transcribing a focus group interview can be problematic, which could be due to reasons like the failure to recognise individual's voices or if participants all talk at the same time.

In collecting data, I first conducted a focus group interview, and followed this up with, individual interviews with participants, which is vital to gaining access to students' individual experiences. Focus groups are a rich and productive means of exploring mutual experiences, but could be problematic if there are participants who shy away from responding. Although conducting a

focus group is a good way of collecting data, it is in the interviews where a topic is discussed in depth, and a good atmosphere to discuss what one might have forgotten, or chose to withhold for fear of being victimised. Michel (2009) states that in questioning participants' experiences in a focus group, some participants may be withdrawn from participating, and only reveal valuable information in one-on-one interviews.

4.4.5. Interviews

In addition to focus groups, I used the interview method to collect data for this study. Interviews are common to qualitative research because they promote engagement between the researcher and the participant. Researchers observe that talking to people provides rich and valuable information. An interview is a natural form of interacting with a person and provides the opportunity to get to know people well (Lourens 2013). As Seidman (2013:3) says, "at the root of an interview is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience." This method allowed me to explore and find the experiences of Lesotho students in Stellenbosch University through their own interpretation.

I used the semi-structured interview technique. A semi-structured interview is one in which the interviewer sets up a general structure by deciding in advance the ground to be covered and the main questions to be asked. This kind of interviewing depends on a list of open-ended questions that include instigation from the researcher. The detailed structure is left to be worked out during the interview, and the interviewee has a fair degree of freedom in what to talk about, how much to say, and how to express it. Semi-structured interviewing is a flexible technique for small-scale research; the researcher classifies questions that will guide the flow of the interview, using the interview schedule to help her probe where necessary, but still allows the participant to redirect the focus as the conversation advances. Krueger and Casey (2000) state that semi-structured interviews are about listening and paying attention. They also state that it is about being open to hear what people have to say. It is not judgmental and it is very important for the interviewer to create a comfortable environment for people to communicate. Another advantage of using this type of interview is that it allows flexibility and freedom to ask follow up questions

if the need arises. The researcher can also probe and dig deeper into the experiences of the interviewee, as to clarify misunderstandings and make the information provided richer. Researchers view the strategic probing as an advantage, as it provides a check on the validity of questions, and asks of the interviewee to clarify or further develop his or her explanations or opinions.

A semi-structured interview is flexible and adjustable, which gives the researcher the freedom to change the questions around, to skip some questions, and leave out questions that are unnecessary or inappropriate depending on the state of the interview (Robson, 2002). It gives the researcher a choice to alter the sequence of the questions to the level of comprehension and articulacy of the respondent. Secondly, it allows an interactive conversation to take place as the interviewee tells their thoughts and perceptions of the topic of discussion, giving the researcher “privileged access to the subject’s lived world” Kvale (1996:125). The issue of the experiences of students in a university is sensitive, and can be fully explored through a conversation between the researcher and the participant, rather than mailing a questionnaire to participants.

For this particular study, the interview questions were open-ended probing questions, which were designed to explore the educational and non-educational experiences of postgraduate Lesotho students at SU. I divided the interview schedule into three sections, and conducted three individual interviews with each participant, one interview session for each section. The first interview had questions on participants’ biographical information, followed by questions on their experiences in the university’s official domain. The next interview was based on their experiences in the pedagogical domain, and lastly the social domain, according to Bernstein’s three domains (see Appendix A). Structuring the interview schedule this way made it easy for me to understand and interpret how students experience different areas of the university. There was a total of eighteen (18) interviews, three with each of the six participants.

I first conducted a pilot interview with one student, who has graduated from SU, then proceeded to adapt, and later drew up the final interview schedule. The focus group and interviews took place at a time that suited the students' individual timetables and university schedule.

4.4.6. Data analysis

For data analysis, I chose to use the constant comparative method. This method is whereby the researcher codes data while simultaneously comparing the units of data collected. Units of data with similar meaning are grouped and coded together. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) state that in coding data according to similar meaning, "if there is no similar units of meaning, a new category is formed" (p. 134). According to Dawson (2009:120), in this method of data analysis, "data from different people is compared and contrasted and the process continues until the researcher is satisfied that no new issues are arising".

I conducted the data collection, sorting and transcribing processes simultaneously. In analysing the data, I first looked at similar responses which I linked together to make themes. I colour coded these similar responses, exported them to a separate word document, and gave them an overarching theme name. I then compared the different responses, and how students responded to the experience to determine if they applied the same capitals. For responses that were not suited for the official domain, I created new themes in the domain with which it belonged. When all similarities in the official domain were noted, I then moved onto the social domain, where similarly, I colour coded all the similar responses and gave them an overarching theme name that would be discussed in the data presentation and interpretation chapter. I did the same process for responses elicited in the third round of individual interviews. I colour coded similar response and created themes out of the responses. The themes that were created helped me in analysing the data, and show what capitals students use as they experience the university field.

While analysing the data from different domains, there were responses that were better suited for a different domain with which they were asked, and I compared the responses, and placed them where they were best suited.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

Before conducting any kind of research, it is important for the researcher to consider ethical issues. Ethics refers to the values and principles that make up part of research, and they define the responsibility of the researcher, the participants, institutions and everyone that is involved. Ethics is “concerned with respecting research participants throughout each project, partly by using agreed standards” (Alderson and Morrow, 2004:11). Jensen and Laurie (2016) state that being an ethical researcher ensures a strong and long-lived relationship between the researcher and their participants. Ethical considerations that the researcher will keep in mind are discussed below.

4.5.1. Ethical application

Ethical clearance was sought using the guidelines provided by the Stellenbosch University, and a one-year ethical clearance was granted by the Research Ethics Committee (SU-HSD-003425) (see Appendix D), which ensures the safety of the dignity, rights and well-being of human participants in a research study. The ethical guidelines stipulated by the ethics committee will be adhered to in the process of collecting and presenting data.

4.5.2. Informed consent

Informed consent, according to Jensen and Laurie (2016), is permission given by the participant to be part of the study, and such permission is given when the researcher explains in depth what the research is about, its purpose, who takes part in it, the funders, how the results will be used, and how it will benefit everybody. As they put it, it “is a procedure for ensuring that research participants understand what is being done to them, the limits to their participation

and awareness of any potential risks they incur” (p54). This is a process where the researcher explains the research such that participants give voluntary consent, having knowledge of every detail.

Every participant who took part in the study was asked to do so on a voluntary basis, and the researcher gave out a detailed explanation of what the study is about before it commenced, in order to get informed consent from participants. I explained to the participants that they have a right to decline to take part in the research. The participants were also informed that should they wish to withdraw from the study; they are free to do so at any time.

Consent from participants was in the form of signing a consent form, which described in detail the research and the procedure, the aim and purpose of the research, and how the information they provide would help the researcher.

4.5.3. Confidentiality and anonymity

The participants’ right to privacy and confidentiality was respected. All transcribed interviews were kept confidential. No participant was identified in the study, and pseudonyms are used in this thesis. The researcher thus assured the privacy and confidentiality to the participants, in respect of the individual interview. I explained to them that I could not give absolute guarantee that participants in the focus group would adhere to the confidentiality of the focus group, which they accepted.

4.5.4. Storing of data

Transcribed interviews and focus groups data will be stored in my supervisors’ office, where only he has access, and I will be given such access when needed. Regarding the audio recordings, all recordings were stored in a computer that required password access, and after the recordings were transcribed, they were deleted from the audio recorder.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the interpretive paradigm was presented as the underpinning paradigm for this study. I discussed the two methods - focus group and semi-structured interview - that I used to collect the data. I also discussed the data analysis process, and concluded the chapter with a discussion of the ethical dimensions of the research. The next three chapters of this thesis are based on the data that I collected during the research in response to the study's focus, which is an exploration of the educational experiences of Lesotho postgraduate students at Stellenbosch University.

Chapter 5: Situating the research in respect of the students' experiences in the official domain

5.1. Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study aims to answer the following research question:

How do postgraduate students from Lesotho experience their education at Stellenbosch University?

This chapter is a presentation and interpretation of the data compiled in the semi-structured interviews and focus groups conducted with Mpho, Lineo, Siyabonga, Thabang, Molefi and Paballo (pseudonyms). The focus of the study is to determine how postgraduate Lesotho students navigate and experience the university field. The presentation and analysis of the data, in response to the research question, is divided into three chapters. Each of these chapters focus on significant aspects of the students' experiences at Stellenbosch University. The ensuing three chapters, focuses on the official domain (current chapter), the social domain (chapter six) and the pedagogical domain (chapter seven). These chapters provide in-depth discussion and analysis on the six students' experiences and navigation of their postgraduate studies at Stellenbosch University.

The data presented in this chapter first looks at the students practices from their home communities, the schooling journeys, and their educational trajectories until they enrolled at SU. The chapter further provides an analysis of how these students experienced the official domain of a university that is culturally and racially different to their previous university.

In the interviews and focus group discussions, students were asked to discuss their relationship with the Stellenbosch University International (SUI), formally known as the Postgraduate and International office (PGIO), residence management and the administrative staff in their respective departments. According to Maundeni (1999), the formal domain of a university plays a vital role in supporting how international students establish their social and educational

practices and their university experiences in general. The chapter is thus aimed at understanding how the six participants in the study were received by the university's formal domain, and how they experienced the administrative processes of the university.

In this chapter, Bourdieu's cultural capital and Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) are used to discuss and analyse the data. Bourdieu (1977) states that in hierarchical structures such as educational institutions, students draw on their cultural capital for survival. For students whose cultural capital and habitus align with the field, navigating the field is easier. These students do not have to try hard to fit into the field, as their cultural capital and that of the field are on par. The same cannot be said about students whose cultural capital is different to the field they move into; these students find themselves working harder as they try to fit into a culture that is different to their own. Yosso's CCW is therefore used to augment Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital as it provides additional forms of capitals that students draw on in order to navigate fields that are dissonant to their home or community contexts.

5.2. Contextual Background

5.2.1. Lesotho

The aim of the study is to understand how students experience an international university field, which is culturally different to the university field in their home country. In order, therefore, to understand the experiences of postgraduate Lesotho students in Stellenbosch University, it is important to gain an understanding of the participants' home country environment. The cultural and ethnical differences between Lesotho and Stellenbosch are contributing factors to students' experiences, and such differences play a big role in the participant's adaptation processes. Reid and Radhakrishnan, (2003:264) state for example, that "different individuals do experience the same school in dramatically different ways on the basis of race". Students who enter a university field that is dominated by people of different ethnic, cultural and linguistic orientation view the university climate as unfavourable because they view themselves as being in the minority. In order to gain a better understanding of these aspects of the participants' experience

at Stellenbosch University, this section provides an overview of aspects of Lesotho's milieu as it highlights some of the aspects of the disjunction between the home and international experiences of the participants in the study.

Lesotho was declared a protectorate of Great Britain in 1843 after the South African Boer war, and gained its independence in 1966, when the country adopted a multi-party democratic system of government (Matlanyane 2015). Lesotho is a constitutional monarch, and King Letsie III is the head of state, while the Prime Minister, Dr Motsoahae Thabane is the current head of government. Unlike South Africa, whose cities are run by mayors based on political affiliation, Lesotho is a kingdom that consists of tribal villages. Local chiefs run the villages in Lesotho, and these villages fall within districts that are administered by District Administrators. The governance of villages is carried out based on traditional leadership. Traditional leaders, also called chiefs, are local authoritative bodies who are responsible for regulating and ruling on matters such as land/site allocation, water resources, public decency and offences, to mention a few, within their allocated villages (Matlanyane, 2015:18).

As a country, Lesotho is characterised by political instability and high unemployment rates (Bureau of Statistic, 2006). Lesotho has experienced a turbulent and unstable political climate, experiencing more than three *coup de tat's* since gaining its independence in 1966 (Monyane, 2009). With political instability comes many other national problems, including economical stagnancy and high unemployment rates, leading students to choose to move away from their home country (Maundeni, 1999).

Lesotho is a mountainous country geographically surrounded by South Africa. It comprises ten districts, with Maseru as the capital. The administrative headquarters are based in Maseru. Each of the ten districts has a small town, usually called 'camp town' where day-to-day administration and banking takes place. Although Lesotho gained independence from Britain in 1966, and is independent of South Africa, its physical location means that the population of Lesotho tends to be dependent on South Africa for a number of goods and services. Many Lesotho inhabitants travel to South African towns such as Bloemfontein, Ladybrand and

Ficksburg for grocery shopping and to access healthcare facilities (Viljoen and Wentzel 2007:127). Many Lesotho parents also send their children to schools and tertiary institutions in South Africa to access quality educational opportunities as in the case of the six participants in this study.

Lesotho is regarded as a homogenous country, both in terms of ethnic composition, religion, language and culture. The current population is estimated at 2.2 million; with members of the Basotho culture making up about 95% of the population, and the remaining 5% is made up of Asians who have relocated to the country for business or diplomatic purposes (Walmsley, 2003). The majority of the country is Christian, and the religious practices of the country are informed by traditions from the Basotho culture. Sesotho is the native and official language in Lesotho, and one of the two official languages. English, which is the second official language, dates back to 1868 when Lesotho was characterised as a British protectorate and it is used widely in government, commerce and schools. IsiZulu and Ndebele are spoken by a small number of Lesotho inhabitants in the southern part of the country, but they are not officially recognised languages.

The traditions of the Basotho culture place importance on the family and as such, families and communities are closely interconnected. Although some Lesotho families have accepted modernisation, the majority of Basotho are still culturally conservative. "It takes a village to raise a child" is a well-known and accurate description of the Basotho community. Elderly persons are entitled to punish every erring child, to help a struggling one, and to encourage them all equally. Community interaction is held in high regard in Lesotho, and it is always recommended, hence the saying, "Motho ke motho ka batho", which loosely translates to "I am because you are". Due to the cultural and familial composition in Lesotho, living with extended family is a norm. Household sizes differ according to demographics, but it is normal for parents to live with extended family members, their children and grandchildren, no matter the age.

Cultural interaction and village life traditions such as commercial farming and labour barter system are transferred from generation to generation. Participants in this study found it

challenging to ask for help from their fellow colleagues in residences if they needed anything, because of the difference in the way of living of Lesotho and SU. According to these students the culture in Stellenbosch University is quite individualist compared to what they know. This tradition of communal living is held in high regard by all six participants, as each of them noted that being part of a close-knit community shapes an individual to be a better person. The participants also stated that they treasured the community interaction that exists in their different communities. Students noted that upon their arrival in Stellenbosch, they met an unwelcoming and individualist way of living in residences, making their initial stay at SU difficult and lonely.

Although the country is moving towards urbanisation, a large majority of the population still lives in rural, mountainous areas. Khau (2012), who defines rural infrastructure as having low population density and an abundance of farmland, explains the demarcation between rural and urban. She states, “the common assumption is that rural areas are more likely to have community contexts conducive to tighter social control, less anonymity and the development of pro-social peer groups and family cohesion”. On the contrary, urban areas are more likely expected to display characteristics that create community contexts in which opportunities for greater involvement in deviant peer groups and weakened family control occur (p. 62). Most villages in the rural areas are characterised by traditional ways of living, customs and lifestyle. Families in the rural areas still grow their own food, and depend entirely on agriculture for their income and sustenance. However, due to high rates of poverty in the rural areas, there is a high influx of individuals into the urban areas for better paying jobs.

Lesotho’s education system takes place in partnership with churches, government and private companies. Schools are owned either by churches, the government or private entities, or jointly by any of these stakeholders. “Schools are considered ‘public’ if they are solely owned by government, or they are owned jointly by government and private companies or churches and the government has a stake in them. Otherwise, schools are considered ‘private’” (Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Due to Lesotho’s mountainous terrain in most parts of the country, schools are spread out; some are far away from the villages, while others are in the towns. Rural schools

that are outside the villages are located kilometres away from pupils' homes, and sometimes many villages depend on one school that is far, forcing students to travel long walking distances. Primary school education takes place over seven years, while high school, which is divided into two phases that include three years of junior certificate and two years to complete a senior leaving certificate takes place over five years, and their high school education qualifies them for tertiary studies.

Lesotho has two universities. The main university is the National University of Lesotho (NUL) was established in 1945. The NUL currently ranks at number 167 out of 1492 institutions of higher learning on the African Continent, and it is located in Roma, 32 kilometres from the capital city, Maseru. The second university is the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, (LUCT), which was established in 2008 in the capital town, Maseru. In addition to these two higher education institutes, there are twelve other higher education institutes, all of which are Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) colleges.

Recently, the NUL has undergone significant transformation in order to introduce more programmes of study to the university as it has limited postgraduate programs on offer. Despite additional programmes being introduced over the past few years, many postgraduate students choose to study at international universities. South African universities are a popular choice due to ease of and lower travelling cost compared to attending universities in other countries. It is for this reason that the participants in the study enrolled at Stellenbosch University to complete their postgraduate studies.

South Africa tends to attract students, especially from the SADC countries, and in recent years, there has been a large inflow of students choosing to study at South African universities (Mapesela & Wilkinson, 2005). Students in Lesotho are part of the influx to South African universities, choosing to study out of their home country due to the instability in the country, the lack of postgraduate degrees on offer, and the decline in the quality of education at the NUL.

5.2.2. Stellenbosch University

Stellenbosch University (SU) is a higher education institution situated in the town of Stellenbosch, in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Stellenbosch University is considered a Historically White Institution (HWI), which previously catered for the White Afrikaans population during the Apartheid era, and SU's institutional culture was predominately Afrikaans during those years. During the post-apartheid period, the university has undergone significant transformation, and Mabokela (2001) states that although the university has tried to reposition itself by accommodating black and coloured students, these students still feel like 'fish out of water' (Reay Crozier, and Clayton, 2010) on the university's campus.

An example of a significant change at the university was a review of the university's language policy in 2016 (Stellenbosch University, 2016). With the language policy, the university is attempting to bridge the gap between the different racial groups on campus, especially in terms of language of instruction. The language policy's orientation to English as the language of instruction, in addition to retaining Afrikaans, is an attempt to facilitate student access from non-Afrikaans speaking backgrounds and cultures. As Mabokela (2001:65) states, "there appears to be more flexibility at the graduate level because the structure of graduate programs involves more one-on-one interaction between faculty and focuses less on lectures".

SU offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. It is known for its ability to offer quality education and research, which has secured it a position as number three out of twenty-five universities in South Africa and 1492 institutions in Africa (IEASA, 2006). SU's aim is to become an institution that is welcoming to all students, despite of their ethnic, cultural, religious and sexual orientation. An institutional transformation plan was adopted in 2013, which is aimed at promoting diversity. This plan aims to help the university in cultivating a welcoming campus culture, and portraying the diversification of the students and staff to reflect the composition of South African society.

The Postgraduate and International Office, (PGIO), now known as Stellenbosch University International (SUI), actively supports internationalisation in the university. The objective of the

SUI is to build good relations with African and International universities and individuals who enter SU, and work towards life-long association globally. Located in this office are administrative personnel who specifically work with international students, helping them with registration, accommodation, visa documentation and medical aid.

For international students to be accepted into the university, their application forms first go through the International Office. Upon acceptance, the office provides students a special acceptance letter that is needed by students to apply for their study visa and National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) funding, processes that will be discussed later in the chapter. The International office also provides transport to first time travellers to Stellenbosch from their preferred bus station, or airport.

5.3. Participants Biographic information

In order to gain an understanding of the educational choices and trajectories of the six participants in this study, it is important to first explore and discuss the biographic information of each student. In this section, I discuss each participants' home background, their family composition, and their educational journey that brought them to their postgraduate studies at Stellenbosch University.

5.3.1. Mpho

Mpho was born in a village 120 kilometres north of the Lesotho's capital town, Maseru. She is currently 37 years old. She completed her primary school education in a village school, walking a ten-minute journey from her home and back daily. She is the third of five children, and she lives with her mother, father, siblings, nieces and nephews, which is a norm in Lesotho households (Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

After completing primary school, Mpho moved to Maseru, Lesotho's capital city for five years where she attended high school, living with a relative for the duration of her high school education. She travelled a distance of about 8 kilometres from her relative's home to school

daily. The high school that Mpho attended was a public school that is owned jointly by the government and the Roman Catholic Church. Quite different to the local village primary school she attended; her high school afforded her the opportunity to socialise with students from prominent families, many of whom already had their plans for tertiary education in mind, influencing her to wish for more in terms of higher education.

On completion of her Form E (equivalent to South African grade 12) examinations, the results she obtained were not good enough to apply to the NUL, and so she enrolled for one-year certificate in Business Administration at the Institute of Business Administration (IBC). She had hoped that this certificate would act as a bridging course to enable her to apply to a South African university. The results she obtained at IBC were not good enough to get her into a South African university, but afforded her a chance to register for a diploma at the Institute for Extra Mural Studies (IEMS), Lesotho. She then registered for a three-year Diploma in Adult Education at IEMS, an affiliate of the NUL. After attaining this diploma, she enrolled for a further four-year degree in Adult Education at the NUL, which she completed. Mpho is the first person to attend university in her family. Her younger sister obtained a Diploma in Business Management at a college in Lesotho. She is currently enrolled for a Master's degree in Education Policy Studies.

5.3.2. Lineo

Lineo is 26 years old. She lives in a village in Maseru district with her mother, father, and siblings, and she is the oldest of three children. Both her parents are university graduates. Her mother went to the University of the Free State, where she completed her Honours in Education, a degree she studied as a part-time student. Her father went to the NUL and completed a degree in Bachelor of Arts in Economics. Her younger brother completed a diploma in Business and Tourism at a college in Lesotho, while her sister is currently completing a degree in Information Technology at LUCT. Although they live in the Maseru, as a family, they have attempted to keep some traditional practices central to their urban living circumstances.

Lineo started her primary education at a village school, and moved to another school in the city, 20 kilometres away from her house when she and her family relocated to their new home. She attended a public high school in Maseru district, travelling approximately 12 kilometres daily to school. She says she would have loved to be in a boarding school, but her mother was not comfortable with her living in a boarding house.

After high school, she enrolled for a degree in Bachelor of Arts in Economics at the NUL. She is studying towards an Honours degree in Economics at SU.

5.3.3. Siyabonga

Siyabonga is 25 years old. He is the first of three children, and he lives with his mother and two siblings, and his siblings are both still in high school. Both her mother and late father attended a technical college in Maseru, Lesotho. His hometown is at the border area, and he sees it as a mixture of rural and urban, 'a township' as he puts it. Siyabonga attended a village primary school, and travelled to and from school a distance of about 2 kilometres daily. He then enrolled at a public high school in the city, where he travelled 12 kilometres to school daily. After completing his Form E, he enrolled for a degree in Bachelor of Arts in Economics at the NUL. He is currently enrolled for a Master's in Economics degree at SU.

5.3.4. Thabang

Thabang is a 33-year-old male student from a village 20km south of Maseru town. He is the sixth of seven children, and he is the first child to go to university. Thabang's older siblings completed high school, and his younger brother enrolled for a degree at the NUL, but he dropped out before completion. He lives with his mother and sister, and his other siblings are married and live with their families. His late father attended an institution of higher learning in Lesotho that has since been shut down.

Thabang attended two primary schools in his village, and they were a 10 and 15-minute walk from his home and back. He went to a local high school, travelling about 3 kilometres to school daily. He states that he chose not to attend a boarding school as he felt that he needed his parents' support and guidance with his studies.

Thabang enrolled and completed a Bachelor of Science in Technical Technology at the NUL. As part of his undergraduate study, he came to work at a company in Stellenbosch for a one-year internship. After the internship, he continued to work for the same company while studying towards a Master's in Technology (MTech) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). While completing his MTech, the company he worked for conducted most of their research with Stellenbosch University, and he has therefore been affiliated with the institution since then.

After working for that company for 3 years, he worked with another company in Pretoria, where he represented Lesotho as a researcher in Chemistry for about a year. When that contract ended, Thabang enrolled for a Master's of Science in Chemistry at SU. He is currently a PhD student in the Faculty of Science at SU.

5.3.5. Molefi

Molefi is a student from a village 120 kilometres north of Lesotho's capital town, Maseru. He is the youngest child, and has seven older siblings. He lives with his mother, brother, sister-in-law and two nephews, as living with extended family is a norm in Lesotho (Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Molefi is not the first child to attend university in his family. One of his brothers obtained a diploma in Electrical Engineering at a South African college, and his sister completed a degree in Education at the NUL. Molefi states that he had a difficult school life, but persevered to be where he is today.

He attended three different high schools and they are all public schools. Molefi repeated Form A (Grade 8) three times, and he was expelled from one school for delinquency. With the first

school, Molefi commuted from home and walked about 3 minutes to school. At that school, he repeated Form A twice, and was expelled at the end of the second year. With the second school, he walked for about 45 minutes from home to school daily. He enrolled in Form A again, and at the beginning of his Form B (Grade 9), he got into a fight with a fellow student, and was expelled. He then enrolled at the third school, where he travelled from home to school daily for about an hour in the first year, and moved to a flat closer to the school in the second year. He stayed in that flat until he wrote his Form E examination, and moved back home at the end of his high school. At the NUL, he completed a degree in Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Soil Science. He is currently a Master's student in the Faculty of Agri-sciences.

5.3.6. Paballo

Paballo is a 29-year-old student from the northern part of Lesotho, living in a village 100 kilometres from Maseru. She was raised by her late grandparents, but currently lives with her mother and brother. She is the oldest, and the first one to attend university in her family. Her mother left school after Form E, and her younger brother attended a technical college in Lesotho.

She attended a local primary school in her village, a walking distance from her house. She further attended two public high schools, this was because the school where she obtained her Form E was deemed a good school, and she wanted to be affiliated with a school that produced good results. With the first school, she travelled from her home to school daily, and with the second one, she went to stay at the boarding house because her grandparents could not afford the daily taxi fare, making the boarding house the cheaper option.

She studied for a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Technology degree at the NUL, then proceeded to the University of Johannesburg (UJ) where she completed a Master's degree in Chemistry. She is currently enrolled for a PhD in Chemistry, Faculty of Science.

5.4. The Official Domain

This section provides a discussion on the application process of the six participants as well as their engagement with the official domain of Stellenbosch University. This section focuses on both the formal processes of enrolling at the university and participants' experiences of the process of engaging with the aspects of the official domain of the university. This includes the application processes that they followed, the documentation needed to move from Lesotho to Stellenbosch, and students' settling in Stellenbosch with the help of the administrative staff of the university. Key in this section is an understanding of how the participants navigated this process. Bourdieu's cultural capital and Yosso's CCW were used to analyse the participant's experiences of the official domain.

5.4.1. Application Processes at Stellenbosch University

Students applying to study at Stellenbosch University are required to apply online. All applications must be supported by certified copies of their supporting documents on the university's online platform. The online application procedure has significantly simplified the application process, especially for international students who no longer have to worry about making use of the postal service and the related time delays when applying to study abroad. For students who are familiar with technology and the process of having documents certified, scanned and uploaded onto online platforms, this is a straightforward process.

All six participants found the application process at SU a relatively easy process and stated that they were able to navigate the online application system with ease. Application is done online, and the participants were able to navigate the system to apply with ease. All six participants had gone through a similar process when they applied for their undergraduate study at NUL, and they all drew from that experience in applying to study at SU. Following this process, the students are then expected to apply for supporting documentation in Lesotho, which will be discussed below.

As postgraduate students, the participants had prior knowledge of application to a university, which provided them with the skills on how to apply to SU. The application process at SU is extensive compared to NUL, but the students' generic knowledge on the processes to follow to go to a university gave them the capacity to get into the process and complete it with ease. Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (1977), is the forms of knowledge that individuals acquire and possess as a result of being part of a certain group. As opposed to undergraduate students, the participants draw on the cultural capital they obtained at the NUL to apply at SU. They understood the procedure of applying in advance, outside of their home country, and the supporting documents they needed to submit together with their application form.

5.4.2. Documentation processes in Lesotho

When students receive their acceptance letters, there are other processes that are both sequential and interdependent that they need to complete before coming to Stellenbosch University. Firstly, before being accepted into university, students apply for conditional funding from the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) in Lesotho. The NMDS is an arm of government under the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, whose aim is to assist Basotho students with finances for higher learning (Nchaka 2009). The existence and functioning of the NMDS is known to citizens, even citizens whose parents or older siblings did not attend universities or colleges, know through word of mouth that funding for university study is provided by the NMDS. Once the student is accepted at a university, and receives an admission letter, the student submits the letter as proof of offer from the university, and a loan bursary agreement is signed by the bursar and the student.

The loan bursary from the NMDS is a 'soft loan', and one of the stipulations in the contract is that the recipient pays back the funds once they have successfully completed their course of study (Nchaka, 2009). The bursary is offered to Lesotho students who wish to pursue their studies in Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland tertiary institutions. Recipients of this bursary are expected to pay back 50% of the funds they received if they take employment in the Lesotho government sector, 65% if they work in Lesotho private sector, and 100% of the

funds if they find employment outside Lesotho. This bursary covers students' tuition fees, cost of accommodation and a monthly stipend for ten months of the year.

Following the NMDS application, students also have to apply for medical aid, and for this process, they need to submit an acceptance letter from their institution. The full twelve months of the medical aid must be paid for at the start of the year and renewed annually for the period of study. Medical aid must also be registered in terms of the Medical Schemes Act of South Africa.

Students also need to apply for their study visa that is obtainable at the South African High Commission (SAHC) in Lesotho. The university where the students has been accepted is required to provide students with a specific admission letter, which must then be submitted to the SAHC. Together with the special acceptance letter, students have to provide proof of bursary or funding, from either the NMDS or other private bursaries, and medical aid cover, and only then can the application for a study visa be accepted.

The application process at NMDS and SAHC was an easy and straightforward process for the participants. The time spent and waiting time for these processes to be completed can differ from one student to the other. It takes about four weeks for some students, but can take up to ten weeks for others, depending on the number of applications received by the different offices. Lineo and Siyabonga's applications for study permits took longer than they hoped, forcing them to leave Lesotho for boot camp before their study permit applications were approved. At the end of boot camp, they had to go back to Lesotho to collect their study permits, and formally register at SU. Similarly, Mpho's application at the SAHC also took long because of the influx of students who needed study visa's, causing her to arrive in Stellenbosch later than she had anticipated. Despite all these delays, students did not experience any hindrances with their registration at SU.

NMDS application is general knowledge that is transferred through local societal networks. In addition, all the participants in this study went through the same process for their undergraduate

study. The resources and skills that were nurtured at the NUL were useful tools in applying for all supporting documentation. Since students had been to a university before, they draw on the cultural capital they gained at NUL to obtain all the necessary information needed at SU.

5.4.3. Travelling to Stellenbosch

When all documentation is processed and ready in Lesotho, students then travel to Stellenbosch to begin their new journey as postgraduate students. Families cover all travelling expenses, because when students move to Stellenbosch, the NMDS stipend has not been paid. Four of the six participants who travelled from Lesotho took the bus from Ladybrand, Bloemfontein and Ficksburg to Paarl, Bellville and Cape Town bus stations. All four of them had done prior research as to what means of transport they should take, where to get off, and how they would arrive in Stellenbosch. Mpho states that while she was applying for funding at the NMDS, she met a student from the University of Cape Town, who explained to her that she would board at Ficksburg, and that she would disembark at Bellville. The woman further explained that she then had to take a metered taxi from Bellville to Stellenbosch. Mpho described the trip as long and frustrating.

It was a long trip. I did not expect it to be that long. The frustration of moving to a new place is too much, especially a place you don't know. It was really stressful.
(Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

Mpho notes that on her arrival at Bellville, she was nervous and worried, as she had to take a cab with a stranger for the trip from Bellville to Stellenbosch, and she prayed the whole journey that nothing bad would happen to her. She also described her anxiousness at feeling foreign when she arrived in Stellenbosch, which she said felt “very white” as there seemed to be very few black students on campus.

Mpho explained,

I thought I would find more black people on my arrival. I found out that the place is dominated by white people. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

When Lineo travelled to Stellenbosch to enrol for her Honours degree, it was her first time, having completed all her previous studies at the NUL. Lineo states that she felt overwhelmed with travelling alone from Lesotho to Stellenbosch, but she was also excited, as this was her first long distance trip out of the country.

It was exciting. I never took trips, even in primary and high school. My mom never let us take trips, so it was very exciting for me. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

She took a taxi from the Maseru border to Bloemfontein bus station, and took a bus at Bloemfontein bus station to Paarl. She arrived at Paarl at 5:00 am, and she asked a petrol attendant to direct her to the train station, where she took a train at 6:00 am to Stellenbosch. When she arrived at Stellenbosch train station about an hour later, she asked a stranger where the university was. The gentleman walked her to campus, and showed her the Arts and Social Science building. According to the letter she received, she could only check in at the residence at 2:00 pm, so she decided to sit at a restaurant close to the building until 2:00 pm. At 1:30 pm, she walked towards the building, where she met someone else, and asked where the residence she was going to is located. Lineo states that she also had with her a map that was sent as part of her welcome pack, which she used to locate the residence where she would be staying.

Siyabonga took a bus from Ladybrand to Bellville bus station. Like Mpho and Lineo, he had not been to Stellenbosch prior to enrolling at SU for his Honours. Siyabonga says his trip from Ladybrand to Bellville was long and tiring. He had initially asked a friend who was studying at Stellenbosch as to how to go about organising his travelling arrangements to Stellenbosch, where he would book his bus ticket, and all the information he needed. He states that the bus he took was very uncomfortable, which made his whole trip awful. Before he left Lesotho, he was able to make arrangements with a cab driver that operates in Stellenbosch, a contact he got from his friend who was studying at Stellenbosch already, to pick him up in Bellville. When he arrived in Bellville the following morning, he had hoped to find the cab waiting for him. He

says he was frustrated when the cab did not arrive, however, there were other taxis at the station and so he hired one of the metered taxis to take him to Stellenbosch.

On arrival, Siyabonga and the taxi driver were unable to find the address that he had been given for his accommodation. They got lost a couple of times, until they decided to ask strangers they met in the road. When they could not find the residence, he then remembered the map that was sent with his welcome pack, which he used to locate the residence. This process frustrated him because he knew if he had taken the cab that was referred by his friend, he would not have struggled to get to his residence.

Molefi, like the three participants above, came to Stellenbosch for the first time when he came for his Honours in the faculty of Agri-Science. He had a friend who came to Stellenbosch a week before he did, and his friend helped him to book his ticket, and sign up for international office shuttle service. He took a bus from Ficksburg to Cape Town station, where he found the shuttle waiting for him. For Molefi, travelling was interesting, as he met other Lesotho students on the bus, who have since become his friends. The shuttle dropped him off at the international office.

Thabang and Paballo had slightly different experiences concerning their move to Stellenbosch. Thabang, as mentioned earlier, worked in the Western Cape already, and he stayed in a nearby suburb. He knew Stellenbosch and was able to make his own travelling and living arrangements. Paballo moved to Stellenbosch after completing her studies at the University of Johannesburg. She took a flight from Johannesburg, and landed at Cape Town International Airport, where a driver organised by the international office was waiting to pick her up. The driver dropped her off at the flat her supervisor organised for her, where she stayed for the next six months.

All participants in this study are no strangers to travelling, and are therefore familiar with change. Some of them moved away from their family homes to study in other towns, and all of them moved to Roma town when they enrolled for the undergraduate at the NUL. What was

different though was travelling to a place that is across the border for a permanent stay, and across different cultures. Four of the six participants, who enrolled for their honours study at SU, were unfamiliar with South African universities, and they draw on Yosso's (2005) navigational capital, which allows them to sail across this different place and culture, that seemed to be unwelcoming to them. As Yosso (2005) states, navigational capital is based on skills that minority groups apply in as they manoeuvre through institutions that are not made for them. As Mpho states, the racial composition at the university proved to her, that SU is not a place for people of her race.

5.4.4. Accommodation Processes at SU

Compared to application into university study, applying for accommodation was less straightforward. Four of the students, Mpho, Lineo, Molefi and Siyabonga required accommodation for the duration of their studies at SU. Thabang had been living and working in Stellenbosch before applying for his postgraduate studies and had therefore arranged his own private accommodation. Paballo only moved to Stellenbosch six months after the start of the year as she was initially studying at the University of Johannesburg, and her supervisor helped her find temporary private accommodation for the last six months of the year until she could formally apply for accommodation in a SU residence the following year. However, the remaining four participants, none of whom knew each other before coming to Stellenbosch, arrived at Stellenbosch separately to find that they each did not have a place to stay due to a misunderstanding of the fact that applying for accommodation at SU requires that the students' complete additional online application forms.

On the application form to apply to study at SU, the students are asked if they require university accommodation, and the students ticked the box assuming that they had now applied for accommodation, and would be provided accommodation in one of the university's residences. None of the participants thought to enquire further about their living arrangements and trusted that this aspect would be organised by the university. Upon arrival at SU, the students learned that ticking the box on their application form was just for administrative purposes, and that an additional online application form for accommodation had to be completed in order for them to

apply to stay in one of the university residences. Discovering this on arrival at SU was very difficult for the four students as none of them knew anyone locally besides the staff at SU.

According to Coles and Swami (2012), accommodation is one of the best platforms on which students can be easily welcomed into university. When accommodation is planned and allocated carefully, students transition into university, and their ability to make friends is relatively easier. To these students, by simply ticking the box, they thought everything concerning accommodation would be taken care of, and it did not occur to any of them to double check and confirm that they would actually be given accommodation on arrival. Because the application and acceptance process went easy, the assumption was that being placed in accommodation would be unproblematic. All four participants who struggled with accommodation had not been to Stellenbosch before, which made the experience of finding accommodation complex and emotionally challenging.

Although Stellenbosch is a fairly small town, it is a much more advanced and larger town than some of the towns to which the participants had been to. The rural and urban villages in Lesotho could possibly be of similar size to Stellenbosch town, but they are of different culture. Despite the students' excitement of being in a new town and new university, they felt slightly overwhelmed at the realisation of how different it is. Finding out that they did not have accommodation impacted on their initial excitement of arriving to start their new journey.

Mpho arrived in Stellenbosch and went immediately to the international office, as per the instructions in her acceptance letter. It was after she introduced herself and enquired as to her living arrangements that she was told that she had not applied for accommodation and therefore, no room had been allocated to her. Mpho pointed out that,

The issue with accommodation was frustrating. On the application form one is asked if they need accommodation, I clicked 'yes'. My assumption was that it is done, but on my arrival, I learned that I should have used a separate application form for that.
(Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

She then met the housing officer, who fortunately was able to find a vacant flat for her that was just 3 kilometres from the campus. Mpho was extremely relieved that her accommodation problem was sorted out in a matter of hours of her arrival, but was worried about the safety of her flat, as it had no security fence, and did not appear to be a particularly safe part of town. She however realised that finding alternate accommodation would take time and that there was no guarantee that she would find something as close to the university campus as the accommodation that the housing officer had managed to procure for her. She decided to move into the flat but said that she never really felt safe living in her flat.

Molefi, on arrival at the Cape Town bus station, had arranged to be collected by a member of the international office who provided transport from the bus station to SU. On arriving in Stellenbosch, the shuttle dropped him off at the international office. Like Mpho, he then learned on his arrival that ticking the box that asked whether he required accommodation at SU during the application process did not mean a room was reserved for him as he had thought. This left him feeling shocked and dismayed. He describes the experience as very stressful. Further, the university personnel that was assisting him at the international office did not make it any better, as the person who he spoke to appeared unsympathetic and rather annoyed that he had not organised his own accommodation. He was then told by the woman to wait for the housing officer because there was nothing she could do to assist him. He had no alternative but to wait, feeling quite helpless as he knew no one in Cape Town and was completely dependent on the university to organise something for him. The housing officer arrived a little later and was fortunately able to allocate a room in the international residence on SU campus to him, for which he was pleased. He was extremely relieved and very happy with the accommodation that they had managed to organise so quickly for him.

Lineo and Siyabonga, both Honours students in the faculty of Economics and Management Sciences did not know each other, and arrived separately in Stellenbosch earlier in the year for a 'boot camp' offered by their programme. Boot camp, as they explain it, is a three-week orientation program offered to Honours students, aimed at socialising students for the academic

year ahead. Like Mpho and Molefi, they had not anticipated the problem with accommodation. When they arrived in SU three weeks before the start of the academic year, temporary accommodation had been arranged for them for the duration of boot camp by their department.

When they arrived in Stellenbosch, they acquainted themselves with the international office, where all postgraduate international students report for registration. At that stage, they did not enquire about their accommodation as they were provided accommodation as part of the boot camp programme. Fortunately, for both students, they had time while completing boot camp to organise their accommodation. Both students note that organising accommodation was made easier by the fact that they had met as Lesotho students and were able to help each other with important information, like who to consult at the international office. They approached the housing officer at the international office, who gave them rooms that had not been allocated.

On completion of her Master's at UJ, Paballo moved to SU as a doctoral student, registering in June. She knew that finding accommodation with the university would be a challenge, so her supervisor assisted her to apply to the university, and used an online platform to organise temporary accommodation, where she stayed until end of the academic year, moving to SU residence in the January of the following year. Thabang did not encounter any problems concerning accommodation either. Prior to his enrolment for his Master's at SU, he worked for a company close to Stellenbosch, and he had accommodation close to campus already.

Similar to their application into Stellenbosch University, students drew on their prior knowledge at NUL residence application to apply for accommodation at SU. When asked in the application form if one requires accommodation, students tick the box with the hope that the university will reserve rooms for them, the way it was done at the NUL. Unfortunately, with this process, their cultural capital does not suffice in the attempt to reserve rooms. None of the students who struggled with accommodation enquired further with the university to confirm that their rooms have been reserved. The cultural capital that helped them apply is proven not to be enough in the processes of accommodation application at SU, forcing them to draw on alternative forms of capitals.

Students' move from one school to the other throughout primary and high school coupled with the move from their home communities to the NUL has instilled in them a form of resilience and independence that enable them to think of the next step when they are told that they have not booked accommodation. In a situation where one would have felt defeated and challenged, participants draw on the resistant capital (Yosso, 2005) to get their issue with accommodation fixed in a matter of hours.

5.4.5. Orientation

As part of welcoming international and postgraduate students into SU, the international office hosts a week long bi-annual orientation which is aimed at showing the students around the campus, and giving them information that might be useful in their stay at the university. At orientation, staff members, equipping students with the important information that ensures a great stay at Stellenbosch, and a successful study period, give an array of presentations. Some of the aspects discussed are campus facilities, social events, culture shock and student life in general. This is also an opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with the university offices where they will get all the services, as well as making friends with other international students. Of the six participants in this study, only one participant, Molefi, attended orientation.

Of the five participants who did not attend the orientation, three of them were delayed in Lesotho by their visa and NMDS applications that took longer than expected, and did not arrive in Stellenbosch in time to attend orientation. The participants did however state that before arriving at Stellenbosch as postgraduate students they did not think that attending orientation was important as they felt that they knew what to expect concerning their studies from their experiences at the NUL. These students had been to university before, and their initial understanding is that orientation is for first-time university students. What they did not realise was just how different SU was to their previous university and the important role that the orientation plays in settling the students in to their new environment. Mpho noted that she realised later that by not attending orientation she had missed out on socialising with and meeting other international students. She explained that she "would have been able to meet

other people with whom I would interact and just to know the place better”. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

Similarly, Lineo stated that she “missed out on the experience itself. It does count when you get to a new place, so I did miss that”. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

Molefi on the other hand, attended orientation, but explained that he missed most of the information as he struggled to understand the presentations. He attributes this to the different accents of the people speaking and said that despite them speaking mostly English it felt like they were speaking in a foreign language as their accents made it nearly impossible to understand what they were saying. This continued into his studies, a point that will be discussed in the next chapters. Molefi explained that this was very frustrating and although he signed up for five days of orientation, he only attended three days as it felt pointless being in the room when he did not know what was being said most of the time. He describes sitting through what he states was torture for three days until he decided to stop attending orientation. Although he attended a few days of orientation, he states that he missed important information,

There are functions and sessions hosted by the postgraduate office for students, which I did not know about. A friend later told me about them, he also told me he learned about all these at orientation. (Molefi, individual interview, 2007)

Molefi then decided to attend the second semester orientation, which is hosted mainly for exchange students. He states that he knew he had missed important information, which his friend gave him.

5.4.6. Lecturers, Supervisors and Administration staff.

This section of the chapter focuses on how students, upon entering the university, are received and inserted into the university by the lecturers, their supervisors and the administration staff in their different departments. More information regarding the students’ relationship with staff members, in relation to their academic success will be discussed in chapter seven. In this

section, the focus is on how lecturers and supervisors supported the students' insertion into institution.

On the day of her department's welcoming session, Mpho got lost in between the venues at her faculty building. After getting lost for a long time in the building, Mpho asked one student to direct her to the secretary's office. The secretary then explained how the session will be run, and further showed her the venue where the session will be held. She further states that the secretary in her department is always willing to help, responds to emails promptly, and circulates announcements in time.

She relates a scenario where she urgently needed her marks, which were not published on the university portal. Mpho states that she went to the secretary's office, who was about to leave for the day, but she made an exception and checked her marks for her. She felt happy and grateful, at how the secretary spared what was her personal time to help her.

Thabang and Paballo's journey were not as linear when it comes to application. Thabang first arranged a meeting with his supervisor, where he discussed his intended research and study prospects. He and his supervisor then agreed on the terms of supervision, and his supervisor facilitated his application to the university. Paballo first met her supervisor at the University of Johannesburg where Paballo was a post-doctoral student. They had an agreement on working together for the doctoral studies at SU, where her supervisor came to work. When Paballo completed her Master's, her supervisor arranged for her to apply and move to SU, as she had to come in June, when applications had long been closed.

Molefi, who came to SU as an honours student, had to complete a mini thesis at the end of his honours studies. Before he left Lesotho, his supervisor contacted him, and arranged a meeting as soon as he arrived. His supervisor then advised him on what modules to choose, which would help him complete his honours, and transition into Master's. He says he was pleased with the advice his supervisor gave him, because the courses his supervisor advised him to take paid off and helped him in both his honours and Master's study.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter gave a descriptive account of students' context in Lesotho and in Stellenbosch University. Additionally, the chapter outlined the participants' reception in the official domain of the university, in conjunction with their experiences. Having come from a vastly different cultural context, where life positions them to engage with education in a community set-up, they were inserted into the 'foreign' and challenging cultural context of their new university. They found themselves challenged with having to navigate the shift from their own culture to the Afrikaner-dominated culture of this university. The communality versus individuality juxtaposition were visible throughout these participants' lives and educational journeys. In other words, whereas they came from a culture that values community cohesion, which served to support their education in Lesotho, the individualist culture as SU left them feeling unsupported. This situation contributed to their initial experiences of isolation and difficulty at the university. As students who come from communities that are deeply rooted in communal way of living, they felt 'out of place' at SU. The cultural incongruence or isolation at SU positioned them in such a way that they had to work very hard to establish social and educational practices in order to close the cultural gap.

This chapter uses both Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and Yosso's notion of Community Cultural Wealth to present and analyse students' experiences of the official domain at Stellenbosch University. The selected students drew on educational and social skills to navigate their way through the challenges they initially encountered at Stellenbosch University. It further shows that in cases where their extant cultural capital was not enough to navigate SU, such as in finding accommodation, these participants resorted to using navigational capitals (Yosso, 2005) to augment that which they lacked. The data that was discussed in this section lays a foundation for the next chapter, which will discuss and analyse the students' experiences in the social realm of the university.

Chapter 6: Students' experiences in the social domain

6.1. Introduction

This chapter is a description and interpretation of the data that I collected in an attempt to elicit student's experiences in the social domain of Stellenbosch University. The aim of the study is to determine the educational and non-educational experiences of postgraduate Lesotho students at SU, and this chapter is aimed at understanding how these students navigate and encounter the social domain of the university. The analysis of this study is divided into three chapters, the official domain, the social domain and the pedagogic domain. The previous chapter, which is the official domain, is based on understanding the students' experiences in the formal domain, which is made up of the administrative part of the university. The next chapter (chapter seven), which is on the pedagogic domain, is based on students' experiences of the academic or teaching and learning space of the university for the selected postgraduate students from Lesotho.

The social domain refers to the students' experiences in university residences, societies, clubs and cafeteria. This domain comprises also of the friendships and connections that students lean on in Stellenbosch University, which can be understood as a search for "social networks that provide support" (Thomas 2002). Thomas, writing on the impact of university practices on student retention, states that all students are in constant search of contexts and interactions that promote inclusivity and that make them feel welcome in the university. The same sentiments applied to the Lesotho postgraduate students, who upon their arrival, hoped that the university field would accept and recognise them especially in light of them being from a foreign country and culture.

In the social domain, the institutional culture of the university is important in that it gives international students whose culture is different from that of local students a sense of home and belonging, and although students mostly elicit non-educational experiences, those experiences are as important as the educational experiences as they determine students' adaptation and living experiences in a university. As Smith and Khawaja (2011) state, the social domain of the

university plays a pivotal role in facilitating the acculturation of international students into university life.

The description and interpretation in this chapter is guided by Bourdieu's (1977) cultural capital and Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW), which were used to analyse the data collected in the second round of interviews with Mpho, Lineo, Siyabonga, Thabang, Molefi and Paballo. According to Bourdieu (1977), cultural capital includes the skills and knowledge that students draw from their home communities, which provide them the ability to navigate new or different social fields, or using Bourdieu's analogy, the ability to 'play the game' in the university field. For these students, their cultural capital that they drew on to navigate the university field was accumulated in their home communities and at the NUL, where they completed their undergraduate degrees. Yosso (2005) states that students from communities whose cultural capital does not match that of the social field use alternative capitals as they attempt to navigate and explore such fields.

Bourdieu further notes that the amount of power that a person has within a field depends on the person's position within the field and the amount of capital he or she possesses. The six participants arrived at SU relatively confident as postgraduate students; however, they quickly realised that they did not necessarily have the social capital that matched the requirements of the social and other domains at SU. While Bourdieu often uses capital to show that different classes have different forms of capital, using the analogy of capital is helpful to highlight that as international students who had completed all their studies in a different culture, on arrival at SU it was clear that the cultural capital that they had accumulated in their home country was not easily transferred to the new field environment of SU. The next section describes the social aspects of the university used by students to create a home for themselves in SU.

6.2. Cultural differences

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Lesotho and Stellenbosch are socio-cultural fields that are very different from each other. The differences are not just geographic. They include

cultural, racial and linguistic differences. Both fields require forms of cultural capital for one to succeed. Lesotho is a country that is homogenous in terms of race, language and culture in comparison to the diversity found in South Africa. According to the six participants, the way of life in Lesotho compared to Stellenbosch is very different. Although Stellenbosch University population is fairly diverse in terms of race and language, the population of the town of Stellenbosch is predominantly white and Afrikaans and because the university is situated in the town, the racial and linguistic dynamics of Stellenbosch town affect students.

For the purposes of this thesis, I use Pretorius and le Roux (2009) definition of culture, and as they see it, culture is the manner in which people with similar characteristics live, and how groups react to one another, and their surroundings. It is represented in terms of language, sexuality, religion, race and ethnicity (Yosso 2005). Features of culture are intergenerational, and they are passed on from one generation to the next, which leads to a cycle of specific culturally informed practices and behaviour (Pretorius and le Roux 2009). The way the participants' families live in Lesotho has been unconsciously passed on to the students as a way of life, what the participants in the interviews referred to as their lifestyle. For the participants, a broadly similar way of living was experienced during their studies at the NUL, and they were therefore able to navigate the NUL field easily by drawing on their cultural capital from their homes and communities to support them. They came to SU with cognitive cultural capitals, and the experiences of a university field in their home country, and the expectation was that they would easily be accepted into SU culture. On arrival at Stellenbosch, however, they quickly became aware of significant differences in the culture or lifestyle in this South African town. All of the participants discussed how they were surprised to discover how much the differences in culture affected their studying experiences at the university.

According to Vos, Van der Westhuizen and Mentz (2012:57), campus climate is an overarching way of living that is dominant and felt in an institution. As they explain it, this climate is experienced by everyone who exists in that particular campus. In institutions, the setup is such that the culture of the dominant group is promoted, and the minority group is left to figure out how to adapt to the dominant culture, and, as Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) put it, this is

sometimes due to the historical legacy of such institutions. Stellenbosch University, as a Historically White Institution (HWI), previously catered for the white Afrikaans population during the apartheid era, and despite some change having taken place to include and accommodate a more diverse student group at the university, the legacy of the white Afrikaans culture still plays a role in permeating much of the campus climate at SU. This leaves students who are from a different cultural background in a position where they have to negotiate unfamiliar cultural norms and practices, which cause feelings of confusion and disorientation.

The focus group discussions and individual interviews elicited different views concerning the SU culture. The participants described SU culture as accepting despite the difference in culture between their hometowns and SU. As explained in chapter five, students experienced a communality versus independence juxtaposition on their arrival in SU. In the individual interviews, they explained that they missed the communality and support that they were used to in Lesotho and described the SU culture as individualist, and as a result prevented them, for example, from participating in cultural activities organised by the university. Although activities are created for all students, participants felt that some activities were structured in such a way that not all students could participate equally. Due to the difference in cultures, students suffer culture shock, which is discussed in the section below.

6.2.1. Culture shock

Bourdieu uses the concept of field to describe a social space within which interactions, transactions and events occur at a specific time and location (Thomson, 2014). Institutions such as a university is thus a field, and each operate on specific rules and practices. Universities are cultural fields that have cultural rules and rituals, or 'rules of the game'. For the participants arriving at SU and realising that the rules and rituals were very different to their experiences at NUL, they experienced a form of culture shock.

Culture shock is seen as the "process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment" (Presbitero, 2016: 28). Culture shock goes beyond the differences in external environments, such as language, communication and everyday surroundings. It refers to the internal factors

that include stress level management, identity confusion and prejudice, (Goldstein and Keller 2015). Students experience significant difficulties in the transition to their host culture, especially in the initial stages of their stay in the host university, and students express culture shock in different ways, such as feelings of homesickness, sadness and fear (Mudhovozi, 2011).

The participants left their country to study in a foreign country, at a foreign university, and as mentioned in the previous section, they felt the pressure of having to live in a different cultural atmosphere. As a result, their initial entry was characterised by culture shock in the first few months of their stay in SU. According to Coles and Swami (2012:88), students experience culture shock at the beginning of their stay in the new environment, as that is the time when they are least familiar with the environment, and have a limited knowledge of the mode of operation at that place. As time goes the feelings of sadness and homesickness are greatly influenced by work responsibilities and relationships, and the realisation of the difference in the way things are done. As they put it, “the first year is critical in the process of socialisation into university life” (89).

Mpho, currently completing her master’s in Education Policy Studies, states that the work-load and the way of doing things in the two universities is different, and she struggled to get used to the mode of operation at SU in the beginning. She further states that although the lectures and academic content of the Honours course were not a problem, she explains that the amount of work she received every week was enormous, and she often could not keep up. Coupled with the amount of work she had to go through in her Honours year, she was also faced with the issue of having more than one lecturer allocated for one module, which she was not used to. She states that for her, that was the most difficult to get used to.

6.2.2. Feelings of discrimination

South Africa remains imprinted with the residue of apartheid and segregation that was based on racial difference. Despite SU’s laudable efforts to transform and diversify its student

population, forms of discrimination persist. Discrimination is a common phenomenon in universities, and it stands to reason that this might still be a problem in HWIs that now accept students from other racial and cultural denominations. Walker (2005), in an article that explores the identity narratives of black and white students in a historically white and Afrikaans institution, states that according to the findings in her study, students' lives in a university are still marked by race, and they are therefore often, if not always, treated as racial beings more than human beings.

The researcher and the participants discussed aspects of racism. Coming from Lesotho, a country that is predominantly black, students found themselves having to negotiate a predominantly white Afrikaans university and all the participants noted that this was something with which they struggled. Participants stated that coming from Lesotho they, like many of the Lesotho population, had not socialised with people from other races at the rate with which they did when they arrived in SU. Although they have seen white, coloured and Indian people in Lesotho and during their previous visits in South Africa, they have not spent time socialising with individuals from these races, as most of the students lived most of their lives in Lesotho. For some of the students, SU was the first place where they had to live with people from other racial backgrounds. These students felt like fish out of water' (Reay *et al* 2010) when they got to SU, and experienced incidents of racial and linguistic prejudice.

Studies show that black students report incidents of racial discrimination on campuses in their everyday lives (Walker, 2005). As students from a country that is linguistically homogenous, all students speak a minimum of two languages, Sesotho and English, and none of them speaks or understands Afrikaans. Despite this, students encountered incidents where colleagues and lecturers addressed them, or spoke in Afrikaans in their presence, making it hard for them to understand what was being said. In Bourdieu's terms, language is used as a tool by the dominant group to control and make the minority group feel inferior (see Webb, Schirato and Danaher, 2002).

When asked what language is most dominant in and around social circles around SU, Mpho states:

English, I think that is the connecting language. If you find someone who can speak Sesotho, then it is an added advantage. But people still speak around you in Afrikaans, although you don't understand the language, but I just resort to English. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

In the midst of feeling discriminated against by their colleagues, participants draw on Yosso's (2005) linguistic capital, which includes the social skills people acquire from communicating in various languages in their community. This capital as Yosso states, gives one the ability to switch between multiple languages.

6.3. Adapting to the lifestyle

People from different cultural backgrounds live their everyday lives differently, depending on the lifestyle and way of doing things in their respective countries. Lesotho is a community orientated country, which while this lifestyle is not always universally present in the country, promotes a lifestyle where one is supposedly never in need of anything as long as their neighbours are close by and an environment where children do not call older people by their first names, to mention a few. According to them, life in Stellenbosch is dominated by Afrikaner culture and the way of living here is different to what they are used to in Lesotho.

When asked what is so different about the lifestyle in Stellenbosch, Mpho states that people in the university environment are not accommodating and that frustrates her:

People here are on their own. People are not as 'together' to show community kind of living as I am used to; it is every man for himself. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017).

Mpho states that the way of living in SU was surprising, but she knew she had to endure it until the end of her studies,

The way people dress here is quite astonishing. This is not the way I would dress in Lesotho. People do not greet you either; they just grin and walk past. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

People wear weird things here; I see a different item every day. You know, in Lesotho, there are limits to what you can wear. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

Siyabonga adopted a carefree attitude reflected by his response to questions concerning the lifestyle; he repeatedly used the words “I don’t care”. He further explains that the way of living in SU is not an issue, because Stellenbosch is not for people like him but for white Afrikaans people who belong here. He explained that:

...they wouldn’t go change anything in my country; this is their home. (Siyabonga, individual interview, 2017)

Participants came from Lesotho with a culture that they have known all their lives, with the hope that it will apply in Stellenbosch. They soon realised that their cultural knowledge and skills are insufficient at SU. They apply their cultural capital in navigating the field, and finding what they could view as similarities in the two fields.

Lineo states that in realising how difficult it is to be in SU, she found out that she must blend in, in order to survive. She says that,

When in Rome, you do as the romans do. You have to blend in until you complete your degree and leave. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

Siyabonga and Lineo displayed resilience as they try to fit into SU culture. For students coming from a country that is predominantly black and has only two official languages, they employ what Yosso (2005) calls resistant capital to oppose challenging behaviour. Accepting that SU does not always cater for “people like him”, ‘Siyabonga decided to focus his attention on his studies and ignore the university’s institutional culture that seemed to continuously alienate him.

In further trying to adapt to what they view as a foreign field, participants draw on their support system, which is discussed below.

6.4. Support systems

For students enrolling at a university with a culture different to their own, they have to adapt to a new educational and social environment. What this means is, students, as participants in this field, need to know the rules of the game in order to participate fully. However, as Thomson (2014) states, players (students) ability to play the game and participate is dependent on their position in a field. These students are minority students at SU, and as a result, their ability to play the game is limited by the lack of familiarity with, and know how, of the social support systems in the university field.

Students suffer a lot of stress, and therefore need social support, which facilitates the bridging of cultural gap between the host countries culture and their own culture (Lee, Koeske and Sales, 2004). In this section, I describe the structures international students lean on at a foreign university, which offers them a home away from home.

6.4.1. Family

Support from next of kin is important in students’ pursuit of their degree, and more so, for minority students who feel left out in universities (Ong, Phinney and Dennis, 2006:693). In a study that explores the relationship between familial support and academic success for Latino college students, Ong *et al* (2006) state that the effects of parental support on a student is seen

in their psychological well-being, their academic resilience, and their ability to eventually adjust to their new society. Research shows that families support their children who are in universities, sometimes by transferring their own aspirational capital to those who have made it to university (Yosso, 2005). It is vital for international students to have the family support as this becomes the only real support that helps them hold on to who they are, what they stand for, and why they are at that particular institution.

Mpho states that she has a great support system through family and friends back in Lesotho. According to her, the love and support from her family is what has kept her going throughout the two years she has been at SU. She explains a sense of gratitude and appreciation for the support she receives, and this has inspired her to want to return to Lesotho once her studies are complete and give back to her family and friends. Mpho explained that:

The support is overwhelming. I feel the love they have for me. They are always willing to help and talk. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

She further states that being the first child to attend university at her home, especially one out of Lesotho, she knows her family commends and support her, and all she hopes for is to go back to Lesotho and help her family. As mentioned in chapter five, Mpho's parents do not have a higher education degree, and her father has since retired from a South African mine, while her mother buys clothes at factories to sell them in the village. Mpho applies Yosso (2005) aspirational capital, which according to Gándara 1995, (in Nkambule 2014), is "the creation of a history that would break the links between parents' current occupational status and the children's future academic attainment.

Molefi also states that in times when he feels down, he just calls home and speaks to a family member who helps calm him down. He explains that with distance being a factor, there is not much his family can do, but just speaking to them gives him so much courage to persevere with his studies.

6.4.2. Support from the church

Coupled with familial support, students find familiarity in religion as a phenomenon they have known from home. They use the connection that they hold on to when campus life becomes difficult for them. According to Rokach and Brock (1998), as quoted by Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland and Ramia (2008), international students use religion and faith to gain inner strength and peace when trying to cope with loneliness. As Sawir *et al* (2008) state, “[r]eligious life provides community and a sense of belongingness. Religion is one of a number of ways of promoting and augmenting social networks (156). Religion, as a form of social support is important to international student adjustment as they lean on religion as a support structure in their attempt to adjust to the challenges and demands of living in a foreign country.

Of the six participants, four of them state that they are Christians, and that they view going to church regularly as an important part of their lives. For these participants, church is also seen as a proactive strategy to enter into fields of socialisation at SU. Some participants mentioned that the churches they are affiliated with in Lesotho do not have branches in Stellenbosch, but they have found other churches that are similar, where they have found a spiritual home. The data below shows that students draw from Yosso’s (2005) social capital that religion and Christianity affords them. This is a familiar phenomenon, which provides them a home away from home.

Mpho, who is affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, states that she goes to church every Sunday. Mpho states that attending church regularly has helped her build a social life. As she puts it:

I find it soothing. I do not have much of a social life, church is the biggest thing I do. Since there is not much to do here, I would rather go to church. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

Thabang stated that his home church, the Lutheran church, does not have a branch in Stellenbosch, but he has gone to several churches just to find one where he could feel at home. In his moving around, he found a church that he has settled with, and although he has a busy schedule sometimes, he tries to go as often as he can. He explains that going to church:

...keeps you grounded, sometimes you do need to go to stay in the right state of mind. (Thabang, individual interview, 2017)

Paballo states that she dedicates all her time to her studies on weekdays, rests on Saturdays in preparation for Sunday when she goes to church. According to her, she spends most of the day at church, and only goes to check her work after church.

6.4.3. Societies/clubs

Minority groups often find and hold on to places and effects that afford them majority status, and a student society is one such effect. This causes them to see societies and clubs as useful, because it is in such gatherings where people meet others and make new friends (Sovic 2009). Societies and clubs in university are a way of promoting social networks. Student societies affords students a chance to feel like part of a larger group, and affiliation to a student association brings members together.

Since societies are social gatherings, they are a good platform to promote social networks, giving students a sense of belonging. Hendrickson, Rosen and Aune (2011:282) suggest that, “co-cultural friendships are beneficial to participants because they offer a feeling of cultural identity and emotional support”.

The one common society that the participants are all members of is the Lesotho Student Association-Stellenbosch University (LeSA-SU). The LeSA-SU is a society that was formed by Basotho on the SU campus, with the aim of bringing Basotho in SU together on a social

platform. This society is a good place for students to make friends, and socialise with other students who share the same culture and beliefs. One student explains it this way:

I am a member of the LeSA, and I joined it because members are Basotho, and it is always great to hang out with people from home, and just speak your language. (Siyabonga, individual interview, 2017)

The LeSA-SU gives participants support and the ability to express their cultural capital. It is a space where they have the ability to express their social capital, and according to Yosso (2005), 'these peer and other social contacts can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society's institutions" (p. 79).

6.5. Friendships

The importance of friends and social networks for university students is understood as a form of social capital, which is said to be important for students in overcoming social exclusion (Thomas 2002). Friendship bonds that encourage mutual support are part of the acculturation process. Upon moving to a new place, one longs for a sense of home and that is usually fostered in friendships that are made at university, and this is because people need others in order to survive. In accordance with Thomas (2002), for these participants, who have been out of Lesotho for over two years, the friendships that have been fostered play a vital role in students' adaptation processes.

Friendships in university are formed in academic settings, while some are formed in social fields, but as Coles and Swami (2005) state, the first few weeks at university are the time relationships are formed, and these relations will later influence the experiences of students, their adjustment processes and socialisation into student life. According to Bochner, McLeod and Lin, (1977), international students have three categories of friends; (a) the co-cultural friends, who function as a reference to their culture of origin; (b) host national friends, who act as a facilitation into the host nationals culture, and (c) multi-national friendships that are formed for recreational purposes.

6.5.1. Co-cultural friendships

All six participants have friends from many different places, and each of them have friends from Lesotho. Some of them came to Stellenbosch with acquaintances from Lesotho, while others met their Lesotho friends during their time at SU. These friendships were then expanded as they met new friends through their existing social network, making it one chain of friends who share similar cultural and linguistic background, where they do not feel the need to fit in and change, and they can always be themselves unapologetically. Participants in this study actively sought out friends that were similar to them.

Such friendships were formed both in Lesotho and in SU, but were strengthened as participants met fellow Basotho throughout their stay in SU. Mpho explains that she:

met her (Lesotho friend) through my former lecturer, she introduced us. We have been friends ever since. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

Lineo in stating why she has more friends from Lesotho, explains that the language of interaction (Sesotho) with her co-national friends is what is most interesting. Lineo states the following:

I was attracted to my comfort zone. With them, I do not have to try too hard to create a conversation. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

As the data has shown, having friends from one's own country and cultural background affords one a sense of belonging, and a sense of familial relations that can only be fostered in one's cultural circle.

6.5.2. Host national friendships

Forming friendships with host nationals is proven to relate to a successful adjustment process, it gives students a chance to be part of local networks and acquire local skills (Coles and Swami 2005). As Coles and Swami state, it is advised that sojourners acquaint themselves with the host nationals when they arrive in a new university, this will give them easy transition into the host institutions culture and practices. Zhou and Toddman (2009), however, note that international students find it hard making friends other than co-nationals, particularly with host nationals. Jetten, Iyer, Tsizrikos and Young (2008:869) in agreement with the above, state that: “the mismatch between the high-status university identity and a relatively low-status social background produces a dearth of opportunities for self-affirmation at university, which is predicted to create tension and unease”. The same way, students from a cultural background that is different to that of the university experience unease and identity issues, which is one reason that could lead to students struggling in making host national friends. Jetten *et al* (2008) suggest that while friendships with host national students are helpful, they may be uncommon.

According to Sovic (2009), students’ living space can facilitate good intercultural friendships, which was the opposite for the participants in this study. Molefi states that he was not able to make lasting friendships in his residence because he lived in an international students’ block, with no South African students, making it hard for him to meet host national students where he stayed. Sovic states that by focusing on the positive aspects of planned accommodation, the possibility that different groups in residences experience the culture differently has been ignored and this was the case with Molefi. The traditional practices in residences have promoted a lack of recognition of cultural diversity within university accommodation. In university residence, activities and traditions that are followed are mainly those of the majority group, ignoring groups such as international students who could experience university differently. International students join HWI, and encounter a social context that is constructed to accommodate a certain group, that might be in disjunction with their own cultural beliefs and knowledge. Four of the six participants were allocated rooms in an international student block

at one of the university's residences, and that means there were few South African students, further limiting the chances for them to make friends with host nationals. Mpho explains that:

when I got to SU for my honours, one black lady approached my friend and I and started making conversation. She was worried she would be the only black person, we all were. We became close as a result. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

Siyabonga met his South African friend when he first arrived in SU. He stayed with him in the temporary residence that was arranged by his department when he came for boot camp, and they have been friends since he got here. Siyabonga explains that,

He came to introduce himself, and through him, I met other friends. (Siyabonga, individual interview, 2017)

The patterns of friendship in university affects students' social relations and attitudes. As a result, the participants make friends with host nationals to ensure better facilitation into academic and social spaces, a process they seem to find difficult. Students engage in this social network because it affords them a chance to learn from locals what is expected of them in this new field (Bochner *et al*, 1977).

6.5.3. International friendships

International students make up a portion of the student population of the student numbers at universities, and the rise is increasing every year (IEASA, 2006). Coupled with academic success, friendship is a very important element for international students in responding to their emotional needs, and having friends from other countries and cultures gives students a sense of relieve that they do not go through the experiences alone. This is an important aspect of acculturation, contentment, and general emotional support (Bochner *et al*, 1977). Participants state that they have friends from outside South Africa, who are also international students.

According to Hendrickson *et al* (2011), such friendships become strong as students feel a sense of commonality, and they feel they are not alone in this foreign land.

When asked about her friends, Mpho states that she does not have many friends, and her international friends are all black students. She explains that she:

find(s) it easier to connect with them. You tell yourself that since you are black, it would be easier to communicate, interact and socialize with black people. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I gave a description and analysis of students' experiences in the social domain of the university. The chapter draws together the students' reception in the social field, and shows students journey as they try to fit into the field and adapting to the cultural climate of the university. The assumption is that the social atmosphere and experiences are not important, but as the data shows, how the students experience their social field is important to how they rate their assimilation and adaptation in university. The difference in the way students socialise with their peers in residences is proven different to how they socialise at the NUL, which affects their stay at SU. The data shows that students struggle to fit into the social environment of the university. In the midst of feeling unwelcome in a foreign place, they look back to their families for support, but soon make connections in SU as a new field where they need to live and exist for the duration of their study.

In the previous chapter, I suggested that the selected students initially struggled to find their feet in the official domain of the university, but went on to exercise their capitals to work out a path into and through the domain, which laid the basis for their social and educational experiences. The next chapter focuses on the teaching and learning sphere of the university, and how students experience and go on to establish their practices in this crucial sphere.

Chapter 7: Students experiences in the pedagogic domain of the university

7.1. Introduction

This chapter is a description and interpretation of the data collected in the interviews and focus groups with postgraduate students from Lesotho. The study investigates both the academic and non-academic experiences of the six participants who were chosen. In this study, the aim is to understand how these students experience a university culture that is dissimilar to the university culture where they completed their undergraduate studies. This chapter is aimed particularly at understanding the students' experiences in the teaching and learning space, or what I refer to as the pedagogic domain of the university. As postgraduate students who come from a homogenous country, the study is interested in how they navigate and encounter the pedagogic field of a university that is predominantly white and Afrikaans.

The two preceding chapters accompanied by the current one, respond to the main research question, which is "how do postgraduate students from Lesotho experience their education at Stellenbosch University?" In the preceding chapters, the relationships between these domains is discussed concerning how the administrative domain and the social domain contribute to students' experiences in a foreign university context (Cross and Johnson, 2008; Zhou and Todman, 2009). Chapter five, which is based on the official domain of the university, explores students' experiences as they first arrive in Stellenbosch University, and how they experience the reception in the administrative realm of the university. Chapter six is based on students' experience in the social field of the university. It focuses on students' residences, friendship patterns and how they adapt to the university.

The current chapter explores the students' experiences in the pedagogic field of the university. According to Cross and Johnson (2008), "the pedagogic field includes discourses, strategies, inputs and processes connected to the university's curriculum, teaching and learning activities" (p. 305). In essence, Cross and Johnson (2008) state that the pedagogic field of the university

is concerned with the academic culture and practices in an institution, and this study aims to investigate how Mpho, Lineo, Siyabonga, Thabang, Molefi and Paballo experience this field.

The exploration of students' experience is guided by Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW), which both explore the knowledge, skills and know-how possessed by students in navigating different social fields. Bourdieu's theory is important in understanding how students tapped onto their cultural capital to navigate the university, and Yosso's forms of capital show how students draw on additional capital from their homes and communities to augment their forms of cultural capital in new or alien social contexts. As Yosso (2005) posits, all students have forms of cultural wealth that help them survive in new or stressful fields, but students of colour have additional capitals that they draw from their communities, that they use in fields where their cultural capital is not enough.

As mentioned in chapter five, the participants came to SU fairly eager and confident that they would succeed culturally, socially and academically. Although some of them came as first time postgraduate students, none of them anticipated the challenges that they encountered on arrival at SU. As students who had completed their undergraduate studies at a university that is culturally different, they believed that they were sufficiently prepared for the learning challenges of their postgraduate studies. Upon their arrival at SU, they soon realised that the requirements of their postgraduate studies at SU were significantly different to their previous experiences at the National University of Lesotho (NUL).

As mentioned in chapter five, the cultural differences between Lesotho, particularly the NUL and SU, play an important role in students' experiences as they enrol for a postgraduate study (Reid and Radhakrishnan, 2003:264). In Bourdieu's terms, NUL and SU are cultural fields in which rules, rituals, conventions and hierarchies are followed, allowing for certain cultural discourses and activities to take place (Webb, *et al* 2002). Students came to SU with a certain level of expectation, and the experiences discussed in this chapter could have been experienced by any postgraduate student, but cultural differences heightened their feelings and experiences.

In chapter six I discuss why significant social adaptations were necessary, however, what participants did not realise is how their experiences in the pedagogic domain would impact on their academic work as well as the adjustments that were required to cope with the pedagogical requirements of the studies at SU. Academic adjustment in the pedagogic domain according to Zhou and Todman (2009:470) “is an important component of student sojourners’ general adaptation”. Zhou and Todman (2009) state that international students are faced with the problem of having to engage in the process of adapting to a new culture while engaging their educational activities, and these two activities affect each other. As they put it, the process of learning a new culture while becoming accustomed to a new teaching and learning atmosphere and style requires skills to deal with the psychological stress that might arise. They further state that issues such as making new friends or joining a new church or extra mural society, as discussed in chapter six, may affect students’ academic progress (p. 470).

7.2. The students’ progress of their courses of study

The six participants in this study are postgraduate students, and they all have the knowledge of being at a university in their home country. In the interviews, the students were asked how they are experiencing their progress in their postgraduate studies. Four of the six participants stated that they are struggling to adjust to the teaching and learning style of Stellenbosch University, and that this in turn significantly impacting on their studies. The participants stated that the cultural (educational) capital they elicited at NUL had not prepared them for a postgraduate study at a South African university.

The teaching and learning culture at NUL is such that students could easily form discussion groups with their fellow students, and learning would take place in a collaborative way. Students get into these groups early as first year, and such groups sometimes survive until their final year. What this means then, is that students foster an academic social community to support each other throughout their study at NUL. The communality oriented culture referred to in chapters five and six that exists in their home country carried them through their undergraduate

study. Participants were rather shocked at the emphasis on survival and adaptation without group support. This, according to them, might be necessary for their academic work on their postgraduate courses at SU, but they reported that they were not encouraged to work in groups or collaborate on projects. They state that their attempts to form collaborated study support groups were often rejected and frowned upon by other South African students.

Mpho is a Master's student in the Faculty of Education. The interview with her was conducted in October 2017, in the first year of her Master's studies. She states that:

It is slow, progress is very slow. I thought at this time I would have had my proposal accepted, and probably working on the literature review or theory chapter. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

In the Faculty of Education, the norm is that in the second term of the first academic year Master's students go through the proposal defence stage, and then prepare to apply for their research ethical clearance via the university research office. The writing process was the most frustrating for Mpho. She states that the

Proposal stage is not as easy as I thought it would be. I thought I would write up my proposal in a few months, submit a few drafts to my supervisor and be done with it. But that is not what happened, there was a back and forth of drafts between my supervisor and I, and that was very frustrating. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

As mentioned in chapter five, Mpho attended a number of institutions of higher learning before enrolling for her Master's at SU. She first enrolled for a Certificate in Business Administration at the Institute of Business Consultancy (IBC), then a Diploma in Adult Education at the Institution of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS), both in Lesotho. Mpho further enrolled for a bachelor's degree in Education at the NUL. It was only when she enrolled for a Master's degree at SU when she realised that the education she received in Lesotho had not, in her opinion, adequately prepared her for her postgraduate studies at SU. She states that as she was unsure

as to how the Master's programme and supervision took place at SU, she had to accept and trust that her supervisor, as the expert, would guide her in her educational journey. This process, as well as the student-supervisor relationship, however, was not unproblematic, a phenomenon that will be discussed later in this chapter.

The administration processes in Lesotho (funding application and study visa application) that were discussed in chapter five presented what routes students take in their pursuit for a postgraduate study. Mpho's frustration was heightened by the knowledge that if she does not complete her Master's degree in record time (two years) her funding contract will not be extended, and she would have to go through the study visa application or extension process, which is difficult and stressful. This shows then that participants are under time constraints, which they had to confront.

Lineo, like Mpho, struggled to adjust to the pedagogic field of the university. As she states:

It was as if everything was moving and I was at a standstill. I couldn't keep up. The workload was so much. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

Lineo is currently studying towards an Honours in Economics, a degree that students usually complete in one year. In the second semester of her year of arrival at SU, she felt the academic pressure, and requested to take her course over two years. She explained that she:

...struggled to adjust, and I knew couldn't make the required marks for one module that was a pre-requisite. If I had failed it, I wouldn't get a chance to continue with my studies. I then decided to take half my modules this year, and the other half next year. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

Lineo states that this was not an easy decision to make. She spoke to her parents and explained what failing that one module would mean for her. The familial support described in chapter six

came into play in that her family supported her decision, and she made peace with the way things would turn out.

Lineo and Siyabonga mentioned in the focus group that despite the challenges they experienced, they also felt they were lucky to have met in their Honours year. They stated that they were a group of four students from Lesotho, and they were inseparable, helping and supporting one another in many things. That connection gave them a form of familiarity that made the experience of SU's institutional culture bearable. Lineo and Siyabonga, unlike other participants, were able to form a discussion group where they supported each other. These participants' knowledge, skills and know-how, cultural capital in Bourdieu's terms, helped them elicit a social group that became useful to them. This group of students had an added advantage compared to other students. They applied their social capital which is a concept coined by Yosso (2005) to describes the networks that people elicit from their communities. Yosso states that such acquaintances offer support as one attempts to manoeuvre social fields.

Molefi also had trouble as he tried to adjust to the academic domain of SU. For him, the struggle was twofold: it was concerning his studies and the constant use of Afrikaans during lectures and class discussion, which will be discussed in the next section. Molefi states that there was a lot of course content that he had to acquaint himself with to be at the level of his colleagues when he arrived in SU for his honours degree. He explained that he.

...would just attend class to show face, but I was not getting anything. I would just go so that when I consult my supervisor one-on-one, he would see on his register that I made an effort in attending lectures. Apart from that, I would read my lecture notes, it's good that we always received them at the end of every lecture. (Molefi, Individual interview, 2017)

Coupled with the difficulty of their academic adjustment, the students also had to cope with lecturers and students' use of Afrikaans in the lecture halls, student discussions and meetings. This issue impacted significantly on all the students as they frequently felt left out or cut out of

academic conversations in lectures or when conversing with other groups of postgraduate students.

7.3. The use of language

According to Bourdieu, 'cultural fields' refer to social contexts where cultural practices take place (Webb *et al*, 2002). A hierarchy of individuals who determine what cultural practices are important in that field constitutes these fields. Stellenbosch University is a cultural field in which certain cultural and linguistic practices are lived out. One of these is the use of Afrikaans as the dominant language on campus.

SU has undergone transformation in an attempt to "redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices" (SU Language Policy, 2016:2). The language policy that was approved by the University in 2016 states that Afrikaans and English are the languages that the university will use as media of instruction. The policy also states that all languages will be used in all faculties, support services and by all staff members, in order to accommodate everyone. The policy is aimed at facilitating the effective and operative teaching and learning in SU, and "to promote multilingualism in the university" (p. 3). The three language options of the new policy are: a) dual medium instruction, where instruction is given by the facilitator in both Afrikaans and English to accommodate all students equally. b) parallel medium instruction, whereby the facilitator instructs in one language, and an interpreter translates simultaneously to students who do not understand the lecturers' language of choice, and c) single medium instruction, which takes place whereby the class is facilitated in just one language, and this is mostly for lectures where the module is of the language itself.

While the new language policy is a vast improvement in respect of the university's commitment to greater inclusivity and multilingualism, the extant institutional culture is still dominated by Afrikaans, and this is experienced as such by these Lesotho students. The participants in the study stated that they experienced the constant use of Afrikaans in their academic domain, which made learning difficult for them. Three of the six participants were faced with the

challenge of having their lecturers and fellow colleagues use Afrikaans regularly in a way that excluded them. They state that this was very disturbing for them as they already were struggling to cope with the demands of the academic requirements. Paballo states that she never experienced direct communication in Afrikaans, but as a lecturer's assistant, she sometimes gave extra lessons to English speaking students who felt they are being left behind due to the use of Afrikaans in the lectures.

As Smith and Khawaja (2011) posit, the issue of language does not only affect the students' activities in the sociocultural domain, it affects their academic work as well. Concerning academics, language "barriers can impact on assignment writing, understanding lecturers, oral and written examinations, and the ability to ask questions in the classroom" (702).

Mpho is one student who experienced first-hand the use of Afrikaans in her Honours year. As she states,

Classes were facilitated in both Afrikaans and English. The one lecturer did a lot of codeswitching. Afrikaans speaking students who asked questions in Afrikaans dominated that class, and she would respond in Afrikaans. She tried to translate most of the time, but meaning was always lost in translation. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

Jayakumar, Vue and Walter (2013) in concurrence, states that "traditional schooling in cultural schools typically align with the needs of the dominant group, and these structures can conflict with, and be oppressive towards students of colour" (p. 555). In Bourdieu's term's, the university staff and students used the language of power to maintain dominance over individuals who do not understand this language (Webb *et al*, 2002).

Mpho was frustrated by this, and she states that she and her non-Afrikaans colleagues went to see the lecturer for a one-on-one session in order to compensate for the information they lost in class. What was the most bothersome for her was that this did not only happen in one of her

modules, but it was in two different modules where the use of Afrikaans often left her feeling marginalised and excluded. With the second lecturer, however, the students did not feel that they could approach the lecturer for additional assistance, as she seemed unwilling to provide additional help, which left them feeling discouraged in their learning endeavours.

All of the participants are first language Sesotho speakers, and the only code switching they know is from Sesotho to English, as English is Lesotho's second official language. They state that they struggled with the use of Afrikaans in the lectures and among their peer groups. This concurs with Andrade's (2006) research on language proficiency as an indicator for academic achievement. Andrade states that in the study he conducted, international students had difficulties in understanding lectures in terms of vocabulary and speed, with lecturers either speaking too fast or in an accent that was foreign and thus less understandable to a student who is not a native English speaker (p. 133).

Thabang arrived in SU as a Master's student, and he states that in one of his Master's cohort meetings that were held every fortnight, a fellow student did most of his presentations in Afrikaans. Unable to understand the presentation, which was a presentation of an aspect of the course work, he felt that his learning had been significantly hindered. He also states that in some of the meetings that he attended, some individuals would ask and respond to questions in Afrikaans, and that bothered him because he could not understand what was being said. He later made peace with it and decided that as a Masters student he had his own research that he needed to concentrate on without worrying about the impact of these experiences on his academic studies.

Molefi, like all other participants completed his undergraduate studies in Lesotho before moving to SU. Molefi experienced the use of Afrikaans when he arrived for his Honours degree. He states that he received emails from administration that were in Afrikaans and there was no English translation. Molefi explains that:

Such emails used to annoy me. When I receive them I do not bother reading them anymore, I delete them. If it is in Afrikaans then it is not meant for me, that is all I tell myself. (Molefi, individual interview, 2017)

Apart from the emails, Molefi had an unpleasant experience with the use of Afrikaans by his fellow students. They were assigned to work in groups of three, and the lecturer chose the groups. Molefi found himself in a group with two Afrikaans speaking colleagues. He states that majority of the time he sat with them to do the work; they spoke over his head in Afrikaans. When he addressed this issue with them, they decided that he should not do the work; they would do it for him, instead of changing their language to English that would accommodate him. Molefi elaborated that:

When that happened, I was actually relieved because that meant I didn't have to sit in that torture. But it got us into trouble with our lecturer, because we had to present the work we did together. I obviously had nothing to present on because I had not contributed anything. But since then, if we work in groups, we usually split sections, and I do my part alone. As for people speaking Afrikaans in my presence, I just ignore it, I have come to accept that this is the culture in Stellenbosch. (Molefi, individual interview, 2017)

The six participants in the study all felt that the university failed to provide a productive learning environment for them as international students by not addressing the issue of language in postgraduate lectures. In their application, they indicated their language of choice as English, but many times lessons were administered in Afrikaans because majority of students in the lectures were first language Afrikaans speakers. This finding echoes with Siyengo's (2015) study on the educational and psychological experiences of first generation students in higher education. In her study, Siyengo states that her participants enrolled for their degrees at a university that offered the dual medium stream (English and Afrikaans), but participants were thrown by the realisation that the majority of the classes they attended were administered in Afrikaans, despite specifying that they prefer English.

Andrade (2006:135), discussing the use of language in schools, states, “the linguistic and cultural competencies of privileged-class families becomes a symbolic form of currency or cultural capital in formal schools’ contexts, because they are implicitly valued and rewarded by schools”. Similarly, in universities, students who have the linguistic capital required by the university, which at SU is Afrikaans, are at an advantage, and their education is not hindered or affected by language switching. Participants in my study, as part of a minority cultural group, can be seen as lacking the necessary linguistic capital that would make it easy for them to succeed academically within the SU context. The kind of cultural and linguistic capital acquired in their families and communities did not support them in their postgraduate studies at SU. In Bourdieu’s terms, many students and faculty members at the university used language, albeit inadvertently, to maintain a particular cultural dominance in the university field. This dominance exercised a level of power that was symbolic in that it was not a tangible power that was being exerted, but one that was nonetheless deeply felt and experienced by all the participants in the study (Webb *et al*, 2002).

In the midst of all domination and misrecognition, the use of Afrikaans in the presence of students fostered their resistant capital, which according to Yosso (2005), is the ability to show resilience against situations and occurrences that bring negative experience. Despite the use of a language that did not support their learning, participants decided to focus on the bigger picture, which is developing strategies for survival that mitigate their linguistic alienation.

7.4. Experience of diversity in lecture halls

Stellenbosch University prides itself on being an international university. What this means then, is that there is a vast student diversity on campus. Participants were asked how they experience the lecture halls, and their responses varied between feelings of envy and of low self-esteem. Siyabonga commented that,

You learn many new things, different things from people of different cultures. I learned work ethic from my [fellow student] colleagues from Malawi in my class, they have good time management, and I have learned that from them. (Siyabonga, individual interview, 2017)

Paballo, like Siyabonga, is grateful for the exposure SU has given her. She explains that,

I look at people [students] from the West African countries. They have so much pride. They are so dedicated to their work and are always willing to make new friends. They are really interesting people and it is only at a university like Stellenbosch where one can meet such people. (Paballo, individual interview, 2017)

The other participants however, experienced feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem in the lecture halls. Molefi states that when he first encountered students in his lectures, he kept to himself for a while, as he felt like he could not fit in:

I could feel that I was surrounded by people who are not like me. I was not free, I wasn't myself, and one can never perform at the best of their ability in such cases. (Molefi, individual interview, 2017)

Lineo also explains feelings of low self-confidence and inferiority. She was more worried about having to give answers in class and being told she is wrong, and her she feared that her lack of fluency in the use of English language would be an embarrassment. She points out that her,

...insecurities would be what if I am not fluent enough in English to get my message across, or I say a word incorrectly. Or just respond out of the context of the conversation those are the kind of things I worry about. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

As Siyengo (2015:80) states, “lecture hall dynamics have a massive impact on the success of all students”. As Siyengo sees it, these spaces are not so much the buildings and physical spaces, they are also the experiences that students elicit from such space. If the experiences are good, the learning process is smooth and easy.

The experiences in this space were of envy and of isolation and feelings of ridicule. This is a result of many factors, and their lack of linguistic competence in Afrikaans is for them one of the key factors of their feelings of isolation.

7.5. Students experiences of supervisor relations

The relationship between a supervisor and postgraduate student is important. According to Holderness (2000), the context within which postgraduate supervision is administered is different, and more advanced than it was more than a decade ago. Due to the increase in enrolment of postgraduate students and the need for universities to increase their output of graduates, lecturers and supervisors are under pressure to lecture, produce research and supervise their Master’s and Doctoral students for completion within specific periods. What this means then is that the ratio of student to supervisor has increased, leaving lecturers overworked. At the same time, this impacts on the students, particularly international postgraduate students who are usually given bursaries to complete their thesis work in a specific timeframe. Having access to their supervisors to guide them through the proposal and thesis work is important, and the participants in the study all highlighted this as a significant factor that impacted on their ability to complete their work timeously.

According to Mpho, her relationship with her supervisor was compromised when she was working on her proposal. She encountered a problem where her supervisor got ill, but did not communicate his inability to continue working with his postgraduate students timeously, which slowed down her progress. She continued to work on her proposal on her own but when it came to defending her research proposal, her supervisor was on sick leave and would not respond to her emails. Feeling frustrated, she arranged a meeting with the head of department to explain how this was affecting her, although she listened to her concerns nothing was done about

assisting her while her supervisor was on extended sick leave. She was only allocated an interim supervisor two months later, who first had to familiarise herself with Mpho's work before they could start working together. Mpho explains that,

After the new supervisor read my work, she told me my topic and study were not clear, and we had to start all over. What made me sad was the fact that I had worked with my previous supervisor for over seven months, and he had approved my work. I had to change my whole study. But with that also, when he came back from sick leave I was going to work with him again, on a study he didn't know. It really set me back, and affected my timeframe. (Mpho, individual interview, 2017)

Lineo also states that communication with her supervisor is weak. She states that her supervisor does not communicate unless she initiates communication through emails. As she puts it,

If I do not send him an email, he also does not say anything. The thing is, I don't know how much I can speak to him, when it is appropriate to do so, I can't strike the balance between over communicating or being too silent. (Lineo, individual interview, 2017)

Paballo has a rather different relationship with her two supervisors. She states that they are both supportive, and are always willing to help where they can. Her problem though, is that her two supervisors are not on good terms, and for a long time their personal vendetta got in the middle of her studies. Paballo commented that,

Sometimes I meet the one supervisor and they approve my work, and when I speak to the other one, they ridicule what I have done. It is difficult to work with two people who can't seem to agree on a way forward, and that affects my work. However, I have really decided to go with what my main supervisor says, because she has the final word. (Paballo, individual interview, 2017)

The experiences described by the participants can be understood through Bourdieu's metaphor of 'playing the game'. None of the students understood the protocol, or in Bourdieu's terms, the rules of the game, for interacting with their supervisors. While this might be a factor in any student-supervisor relationship, for the participants in the study these factors were enhanced by the cultural differences that they had already encountered at SU.

Yosso, building on Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital uses the concept of navigational capital in reference to a skill that individuals use to manoeuvre through social institutions. As Yosso (2005:80) states, navigational capital refers to a students' ability to manoeuvre his or her way through an institution that is dissimilar to one's family and community cultural background. As discussed in chapter six, SU as a HWI, for the six participants in the study, presented itself as a social field that was significantly at odds with the social field of NUL where they completed their undergraduate studies. Yosso describes the need for students to develop navigational strategies in order to become successful within what she terms "racially-hostile university campuses" (2005:80). She further notes that students need to develop "academic invulnerability" in order to "sustain high levels of achievement, despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly at school and, ultimately dropping out of school" (p. 80).

Yosso (2005) cites the need for resilience, which according to her, is proven in students' ability to apply resistant capital. Resistant capital refers to the knowledge that students derive from home communities, which they apply to difficulties encountered at a field that they feel oppresses them. With this capital, students engage in behaviours and practices that allow them to resist the feelings and experiences of subordination.

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an analysis and interpretation of the experiences of postgraduate Lesotho students in the pedagogic field of Stellenbosch University. In this chapter, I give a

description of students as they attempt to navigate the teaching and learning domain of a university that is culturally different to what they have known in their undergraduate study. Findings in chapters five and six have shown that the experiences of students in all domains are interdependent in making up their arduous journeys at SU.

Participants in this study have all been to a university prior to their enrolment at SU, and their knowledge of a university field planted in them expectations of how a university should be like. The core finding of their experiences in the pedagogic domain is that the selected students initially experienced severe marginalisation related to them accessing their learning on their study programmes. This was the result of an institutional culture that failed to provide them a platform for adequate immersion into their studies. The preponderant use of Afrikaans was a key challenge, and so were the lecturers and departments' relative lack of availability to deal with their peculiar concerns and problems. The students, however, drew on especially their resistant and navigational capitals to figure out ways of surviving and adapting to the core expectations for successful study. This proved arduous and sometimes tortuous, but they nonetheless persevered, although they felt that their study experiences would have been much enhanced if the activities in pedagogical domain were more supportive of their needs as students who are from a foreign country and culture.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

This chapter concludes and summarises the thesis, and presents the findings on which the thesis is based. The focus of the study is on how the six postgraduate study participants encountered Stellenbosch University as an educational field, and how their experiences were shaped by their social and educational encounters. Postgraduate study is a relatively new phenomenon for students coming from an under-developed country like Lesotho. Although all the participants had previously attended a higher education institution based in Lesotho before they enrolled at SU, none of them anticipated the vast disparities that they encountered on arrival at Stellenbosch University as a former white Afrikaner institution.

The study revealed is that the selected students feel that SU as a Historically White Institution (HWI) is culturally alienating for them. Mpho, for instance, states that on her arrival at SU, she felt 'very black', and struggled to feel comfortable in her new environment. The study participants entered the SU field expecting that significant transformation had taken place post-1994. They came with hope and expectations that the university would be a home away from home (Lourens, 2013, Siyengo 2015), and none of them anticipated the significant cultural and pedagogic incongruences between their previous university field in Lesotho and what they encountered on arrival and during their studies at SU. In the interviews and focus groups, they described their feelings as being those of alienation, frustration, and culture shock.

Chapter one introduced the background and discussed the significance of the study. In this chapter, I provided the rationale of the study, and provided the background. In response to the research question: how do postgraduate students from Lesotho experience their education at Stellenbosch University?, the study has investigated the experiences of students who study for their postgraduate degrees at SU. Chapter one also highlights the importance of this study in relation to the increasingly common trend of the movement of students and staff across countries and continents.

In chapter two, I presented the literature relevant to key aspects of the internationalisation of higher education, which describes the movement of students and staff across countries for reasons including better quality education and better job opportunities. Literature on how students from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region go about accessing tertiary education in other countries was discussed. The focus of the literature review was on the educational and non-educational experiences of students from foreign countries (Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela, 2012). The literature review also highlighted the adjustment issues of international students in South African universities. What this literature shows in relation to my study is how students from foreign cultural contexts have to negotiate an institutional culture that is not aligned with their own culture. Participants who enter the university field with the knowledge and skills of a field are at an advantage with regards to their position in the field (Wallace, 2014), and the study participants, whose home culture is different to that of the university, found SU to be a relatively alienating and hostile field (Webb *et al* 2002).

Despite studies being conducted on the experiences of international students (Du Plessis and Fourie, 2011; Smith and Khawaja, 2011), there is limited literature that aims to understand the experiences of postgraduate students. Existing studies mainly view the experiences of international students in generalised terms, and ignore the specific dynamics regarding the experiences of those foreign students who have to adapt to the institution's culture of their new universities.

Chapter three presented the theoretical framework of this study and provided a discussion on Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and Yosso's (2005) theory of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). These frameworks provided the theoretical lens that enabled me to analyse and discuss how the participants in my study drew on the cultural capital from their home and communities in order to navigate what to them was the dissonant terrain of a SU. In conjunction with Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, I used Yosso's CCW as a lens to capture and understand the alternative capitals that the participants drew on to support their educational endeavours during their postgraduate studies at SU. An example of how they drew on their

capitals from their homes and communities could be seen in their use of social capital to support and hold on to places and gatherings that give them a sense of home in a culture they see as dissonant from their own. Bernstein's three domains were also used in the study to demarcate the sections of the university where participants existed, assisting in data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

In chapter four I explained why it was apposite for me to employ a qualitative approach in conducting the research for this study. Qualitative studies are concerned with participants' stories and the researcher is interested in offering an interpretation of these stories. In this chapter, I explained that the researcher aimed to make sense of meanings as explained by participants themselves. This chapter also provided the rationale for using focus groups and semi-structured interviews as part of the research process. Semi-structured interviews give the autonomy to the participant to tell their story, and at the same time giving the researcher a chance to probe and guide the interview in the direction of the main question. This methodology and attendant research method afforded me the chance to respond to my main research question, which is "how do postgraduate students from Lesotho experience their education at Stellenbosch University?"

Chapters five, six and seven are the data presentation and interpretation chapters. Each of these chapters responds to the thesis's sub-questions respectively. Chapter five is a response to the first sub-question: how do foreign national students from Lesotho encounter and navigate Stellenbosch University? This chapter provides an overview on how the six students, as international students applying to complete their post-graduate studies at SU, experienced the administrative and formal processes of the university. Although these students came to Stellenbosch University as postgraduate scholars, they were all first time travellers to Stellenbosch. What this chapter highlights are the students' initial feelings of confusion and frustration due to hindrances and stumbling blocks, such as travel arrangements, and accommodation issues that they encountered as they travelled from Lesotho to SU. Unsure what to expect on arrival at SU, the students described how the processes and cultural

integration into SU were significantly different to their experience of higher education in their home country.

In order to navigate the process of the formal domain of SU in a relatively successful way, the chapter shows how, drawing on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, the six students encountered and navigated the processes within the formal domain. Their prior knowledge of a university field (back in Lesotho) was important as it helped them figure out the right channels to follow, and the people to consult when they arrived in SU. The chapter illustrated how the students were able to 'close' the gap between them and the university progressively during their study period as they figured out how to navigate and establish their presence on campus.

Chapter six responds to the second sub-question: how do postgraduate students from Lesotho experience and engage in their educational socialisation at Stellenbosch University? In this chapter, the focus was on the six students' experiences in the social domain of the university. The social domain refers to the student's friendship patterns, experiences of the residences, and choices to involve themselves in different cultural societies at the university. This chapter highlights both the difficulties the students had fitting into a new institutional culture as well as the capitals and Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) they drew on to navigate this process. According to Cross and Johnson (2008), the university climate is important in that it gives students a sense of home and belonging in order to pursue their studies successfully, it was therefore important for students to enter a university culture that is welcoming, to ease their educational process.

The six participants all described how difficult it was to establish new friendships at SU due to the very different cultural climate as well the constant use of Afrikaans not only in lectures but also socially among the other postgraduate students. The participants described this as alienating and discussed how they found themselves making friends with either other Lesotho

students or students from other African countries who likewise felt alienated by the culture and language and who then gravitated to one another using English as the language for socialising.

The participants further described how they did not always feel comfortable being involved in the social activities on offer, and as such they tended to participate only in international activities such as the international food evening or activities offered by Stellenbosch University International (SUI). Discussing the social domain, the participants expressed their disappointment that there was no stronger culture of communality and interaction among the postgraduate student group. Rather, what they found was that the postgraduate community split into different cultural groupings leaving students, like the Lesotho students, to find or establish their own group with their own country people. This was not what they envisaged when choosing to study at SU, wanting rather to be part of the SU community as a whole. Their resistant capital allowed them to remain resilient in the face of opposition that they felt in the social domain, while social capital enabled them to build networks and friendships with people who exhumed familiarity, and these networks are meant to offer support in order to navigate the field.

Chapter seven presented the experiences of students in the pedagogic domain of the university. This chapter responds to the third sub-question: how do these Lesotho students engage in their learning practices of Stellenbosch University? This chapter describes how coming to SU fulfilled the participants' dream of pursuing a postgraduate study at one of the best universities in South Africa. Expecting the studies to be rigorous, the students explain that there were many cultural elements that unexpectedly impacted on their academic work. Despite initially feeling academically ready, the students describe their struggle to manage their studies in relation to the 'cultural aspects' of how teaching and learning takes place at SU. Aspects such as the use of Afrikaans in lectures and tutorials was problematic for the students, the lack of communal support when completing assignments, as well as supervisor relations were some of the aspects discussed in this chapter.

In order to manage the cultural and pedagogical differences the students encountered, the chapter describes how the students had to develop and improve their use of English as the academic language for their studies. None of the participants' home language is English and when studying their undergraduate degrees in Lesotho their lecturers were able to explain concepts in their home language, which is Sesotho. If an individual's cultural capital is in alignment with the field within which they operate, their ability to play the game successfully is enabled, and their feel for the game becomes second nature (Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie, 2003). Similarly, Afrikaans students at SU who are also not English first language speakers, have the advantage of having concepts translated into Afrikaans by their lecturers, while the participants in the study have to grapple with the concepts in their second language, often, as a result, taking longer to understand new work. In order to navigate the teaching and learning field of the university, the students used alternative capitals such as resistant capital, which gets them through a frustrating period, and hold on to the knowledge that they are in SU for their degrees and they will soon go back home. In Bourdieu's analogy of playing the game, the focus is on how participants adapt to their field, and what practices they employ to apply the rules and regularities required by their field, so that they are successfully playing the game. For the participants in my study, successfully playing the game required them to adapt to the rules and regulations of the field of SU as described in the three domains. Bourdieu reminds us that, in this analogy of playing the game, the rules and regularities are not explicit, but students have to figure the rules out and adhere to them. Each field has its own rules and regularities, and participants in each field are expected to know the rules, understand how the game is played, and this knowledge then gives them power to play the game.

As an example of how the participants adapted to the expectations of the new university field, one of the participants, Siyabonga, chose to immerse himself into the social domain as a way to understand the rules and regulations. Siyabonga made more South African friends as part of learning how to play the game within his new university field, which in turn made him feel like part of the culture of the university. He realised that as a Lesotho student, he had to use different

strategies in order to succeed in an alien surrounding. For him, experiencing the social domain of SU was one of the most important aspect of his time at SU. He used the social domain to gain access into the university, and to learn and adapt to the rules and regularities of this environment. Adopting Bourdieu's analogy of playing the game, Siyabonga chose to embody the rules and regularities of his new field by attending social functions hosted by the university, where he would meet and make new friends, which gave him power to play the game at SU. What he did differently to his Lesotho peers was to immerse himself into the lifestyle of SU, and this process enabled him to gain access to aspects of the university that he otherwise would not have had access to if he had stuck with his Lesotho friends only. His ability to figure out the rules of the game appeared to be a successful strategy, because he was able to complete his Honours and Master's degrees in a period of two years.

Lineo, unlike Siyabonga, limited herself to only making friends with students from Lesotho, which was her way of surviving the field. Her pedagogic or learning experiences at SU were marked by the challenge of having to speak English during and after lectures, which was a problem for her. For this student whose first language is Sesotho, developing proficiency in English as a language of university instruction, which was also the language of social interaction, was a challenge. Her lack of facility in English often caused her to withdraw and to engage only on a social level with Lesotho students, which in turn minimized her exposure to communicating in English. What this story shows, in relation to Bourdieu's theory of playing the game, is that Lineo did not learn the rules of the game. She did not understand that in order to succeed at SU, there are rules and regularities that she had to familiarise herself with. Rules including making friends outside one's cultural circle could have been an advantage for Lineo. Even after two years of being at SU to study for an Honours degree in Economics, Lineo was not successful in her studies because she did not feel at home in SU, and never immersed herself into what the university had to offer her. She never figured out the rules and regularities by which she had to play to make her studies successful, and therefore, left SU without having completed her degree.

Mpho relied on her religion as a form of social practice to support her academic endeavours. Her official and pedagogic domains seemed to be difficult for her, and she chose to immerse herself in church because that gave her a form of social, emotion and spiritual support. She struggled with many of the academic processes of her work because she had expectations from her lecturers and supervisor, which she felt were not met. She struggled to learn the rules of the game, and like Lineo, operated effectively in the social domain because it promised her social support, but she also minimised her participation in other domains. Mpho withdrew from the other domains, and mastered the rules of the social field, but for a successful stay in SU, that was not enough. She continues to struggle and holds on to the ideal of completing her studies and leaving SU, a place she described as lonely and unwelcoming.

The two PhD candidates had completed their Master's studies at South African universities, one at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), and the other one at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). For these students, fitting in and understanding the rules of the regularities was seen to be an easier task, as they both had the knowledge of how South African universities operate. They both showed a better understanding of how to play the game in all domains, and this was because they had been at a South African university before. They had a transition period in their stay at the other universities, which allowed them a chance to learn the rules of the game in their previous South African university. Their prior knowledge of the rules of the game made them successful in SU, having both obtained their degrees at the end of this study, which was after four years.

Molefi on the other hand, isolated himself in his first year at SU. One of his earliest experiences was of his colleagues discussing group work in Afrikaans in his presence, which made him feel unwelcome, and led him to isolate himself from any activities and gathering that had the potential of the use of Afrikaans. He described the field as culturally alien on arrival, and decided to keep to himself and focus mainly on his Honours studies. In his second year at SU, he realised that this was not conducive to his studies. He realised that there were many support structures offered by the university that he has not been able to access because he had not engaged with the field. He realised that in order to play the game, he needed to learn the rules.

For Molefi, there was knowledge that the NUL had not given him, which he needed in order to survive the new university field. As mentioned in chapter six, language was the biggest issue. He struggled with the code switching between English and Afrikaans in the pedagogic domain, and with the different accents. By the third year of his study, he understood the importance of the English language in his studies, and immersed himself into the activities hosted by the university and he used the social field activities, which made him more comfortable with the culture and that would in turn support his learning. Based on Bourdieu's analogy of playing the game, it was important for Molefi to consciously go out and discover what the university had to offer him, and his immersion into the field made his stay a lot easier. He describes how he could not understand different people's accent, and in Bourdieu's analogy of playing the game, he purposely went out to attend functions that would expose him to different people, learning the rules and regularities, which made it easier for him to play the game. He continues to study for his Master's degree at SU.

Stellenbosch University as an internationally recognised institution, ought to recognise and know its student intake and their needs in such a way that they would be able to cater for their international students. Moving from another country to study in SU with the hope that accommodation has been secure, only to find on arrival that there has been a glitch in the application process may be considered a small issue, but it had emotional bearing on these students. I recommend that the university look into ways it can make applicants aware of the steps to follow in the process of applying to study and accommodation.

The university through its residences has support clusters for first year students, as a way of welcoming them. A similar concept would be beneficial to postgraduate students, especially those that move to SU as first time postgraduate students. These clusters can be organised in a way that they help students build a community of social support, and respond to postgraduate students' needs, rather than it being all about games as it is for first year students.

It is also important that the university offer more optimal academic support through lecturers and supervisors. The study participants were successful students in the sense that they has

been accepted into one of the best universities in South Africa, but their academic success moving forward is not just based on their ability to apply for university and be accepted. Lecturers could support such students by understanding their educational background, and how transition from undergraduate study in a different university and country might slow down their learning process.

8.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, the focus of the study was on the educational experiences of Lesotho postgraduate students in the foreign field of a South African university. The study's main and overriding conclusion is that the educational experiences of the Lesotho students who formed the basis of this study is one of initially struggling to find their feet in the university which they experienced early on as alien and relatively hostile. The students found good support in the formal domain that mitigated their initial feelings of isolation. Drawing on their cultural capital and CCW, they managed to develop social strategies and networks that positioned them as relatively productive university students, especially via the use of peer support and religious structures. Their experiences in the pedagogic domain of the university were mixed, they found their experiences in respect of the language dynamics at the university perplexing and demoralising. However, the students drew on their resilience and navigational capitals to figure out how to play the game at SU. While their experiences were mixed, what was central to the way they established their educational practices was the strategies, drawing on their cultural capitals and CCW, which they used to figure out how to play the game at this university. Successful study for them was determined by their ability to play the game relatively successfully based on their resilience, support from friends and the social networks that they built and could draw on to succeed.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

The study aims to investigate how postgraduate students from Lesotho who are studying at Stellenbosch University experience and navigate the university as foreign (black) students.

Thank you very much for doing this interview today. I am Mannini Kotele and I am studying for a Master's in Education Policy Studies. As discussed earlier, you have been chosen as a participant in this study because you are a postgraduate student from Lesotho, and you fit the criteria of the study participants. Our interview will take approximately 45 minutes, and I will return for a second and third interview depending on how much more information we cover today. Please remember that, you can pull out of this interview at any point if you feel uncomfortable, and there will be no penalty for that. Be advised also that, everything you say here will stay between you as the participant, and the researcher.

Biographic information

1. Tell me about yourself. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where were you born?
4. Where in Lesotho do you stay?
5. Tell me about your home community, what is interesting about it? And what is not interesting?
6. Tell me about your traditional practices, church and religious practices, your neighbourhood friends and neighbours in your community.
7. Would you say your community is still traditional or it has modernised?
8. How has your community shaped you? Your personality to be exact?
9. What schools did you go to, Primary and High school?
10. Your high school study, was it a boarding school or were you a day scholar? (why?)
11. Tell me about your undergraduate study, what program did you study? Where in Roma (NUL) did you stay? For how long, and why not the other? (Res or private flats).
12. Who funded your undergraduate study?

13. Did you work after your undergrad study? If yes, please explain.
14. If you had been here for your postgraduate study, what would you be doing now?
15. Have you always wanted to study further?

Question 1. How do foreign national postgraduate students from Lesotho encounter and navigate Stellenbosch University?

1. You are in Stellenbosch to pursue a postgraduate study, explain to me how important it is that you are here and not in Lesotho working.
2. Let us talk about Stellenbosch University. Of the universities in South Africa, who or what influenced you to choose this one?
3. Did you apply to any other universities?
4. Tell me about the application process. Who helped you? How did they help you?
5. In what language was your application form and all corresponding documentation?
6. Was it easy for you to use?
7. The response on your admission, was it easy for you to follow that up until you got here?
8. Had you been to this place before, Stellenbosch? Or was the first time you came to study the very first time ever?
9. How did you travel from Lesotho? With whom?
10. How did you know where you had to go? Who took you there?
11. Describe your experience; moving from Lesotho to this (new) place, how was it? Registration, etc.
12. Let us talk about the issue of moving to a new place, how did you deal with that?
13. What does the university do to accommodate international students?
14. Did you attend orientation on your arrival? How was it?
15. Where did you first go when you got to SU? Whom did you meet first? How was the reception? And how did that make you feel?
16. Which residence were you placed? Who informed you about it?
17. How was your communication with res management? Were they helpful?
18. In what language does the res administrative staff communicate?
19. How did you experience moving into your place, was res admin helpful?
20. When you got to res you met many students from different places, tell me about that.

21. How welcoming were they? Tell me about it.
22. In what language did they communicate?
23. Have you experienced any form of racial discrimination? Tell me about it. How did it make you feel? What did you do about it?

Question 2. How do these students engage in the learning practices at Stellenbosch University?

1. What is Stellenbosch culture like for you? Please explain.
2. Do you ever attend social gatherings?
3. Which language is most dominant in social gatherings? How does that make you feel?
4. What sports are dominantly played and watched in SU? Do you like any of those sports/ how does that make you feel? What do you do about it?
5. What do you do for fun in Stellenbosch?
6. What Christian denomination are you affiliated with? Does it have a branch in SU? Do you ever attend church?
7. What lifestyle is central in Stellenbosch? Do you enjoy what most people do for fun? Please explain.
8. What kind of music do most people listen to? Do you like the music? How does that make you feel?
9. Is the food served in most places the kind of food you like? Do you enjoy the food? Please explain.
10. Do you have friends in Stellenbosch? Where are they from?
11. Do you watch anything on the screen in the Neelsie or the residence common room? What do you watch the most? How is the atmosphere at such places?
12. Let's talk about you own culture, is it important to stay in touch with your Lesotho culture when in SU? Why (not)?
13. Do you exercise your culture in SU? How?
14. Have you ever felt like your culture is being underestimated in SU? Please explain.

15. Does SU culture sometimes dominate your own culture? How? How does that make you feel?
16. Are you a member of any society or club? Which one(s)? Why?
17. How often do you go to the student centre (Neelsie)? How do you find the social atmosphere?
18. Tell me about your family and friends back in Lesotho, are they supportive?
19. Do you have friends in Res?
20. In res, are there any social functions hosted for students? What kind of music do they play such functions? How does that make you feel?
21. Have you ever experienced any form of racial discrimination in res? Please tell me about it. What did you do about it?

Question 3. How do these students engage in the learning practices at Stellenbosch University?

1. What course do you study, and which level are you?
2. How are you finding the progress of your course so far? Please explain.
3. How do you experience your lessons and tutorial? Please explain.
4. Do you ever find yourself struggling with course content? And how do you overcome that?
5. Describe the experience of being in a multiracial classroom, how did that make you feel?
6. How many languages do you speak, read and write?
7. In what language was your learning material?
8. Still on the issue of language, in what language was your lectures and learning material?
9. Do you consider your lecturers supportive? Explain your answer to me. How does that make you feel?
10. In what language do your lecturers communicate? Do you understand it? How does that make you feel?

11. During your application, what language did you choose as your language of choice?
Do you feel that your language of choice has always been considered and used, in all your academic interactions here?
12. How would you rate your fluency in Afrikaans?
13. How does it make you feel, that you are in an Afrikaans-speaking dominated place and you are not fluent in the language? How do you overcome that?
14. How do you experience the use of Afrikaans as a medium of communication?
15. Is there ever a communication barrier caused by language? How do you overcome that?
16. From what we know, the infrastructure of SU is different to NUL, how did you find the university when you first got here?
17. Test weeks, exams time and submission time gets tough on students. How do you cope when it gets difficult? Who or what helps you, and how do they help?
18. Do you find yourself having to work in groups? If so, how do you choose your group members? Why in that particular way?
19. Do you plan to study further than your current level of study? Why?
20. Have you ever experienced any form of racial discrimination in class? Please tell me about it. What did you do about it?
- 21.

Appendix B: Focus Group Questionnaire

FOCUS GROUP FOR LESOTHO POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Thank you for taking time to participate in this focus group that investigates the experiences of Lesotho postgraduate students at Stellenbosch University. You have been chosen to take part in this focus group because you are postgraduate students who studied for their undergraduate at the National University of Lesotho.

During this focus group I will ask questions and facilitate a conversation about your experiences at Stellenbosch University. My research is concerned with how you, as postgraduate students from Lesotho find the campus in terms of its culture. I am interested in learning of your experiences and how you live out those experiences, and how you eventually overcome those experiences. Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions I will ask, just different opinions. The aim is to stimulate conversation and hear the opinions of everyone present. I hope each of you will be comfortable speaking honestly and sharing your ideas.

Please note that this session will be recorded to ensure that I capture every idea, therefore, can we try to have one person speak at a time. Please also note that, the comments from this focus group will be confidential and no name will be used in presenting the data.

1. Let us do a round of introductions. Can each of you tell the group your name, hometown, field and level of study, year of completion at the NUL, and your field of study at the NUL?

OFFICIAL DOMAIN

2. Let us talk about Stellenbosch University, how did you choose this university?
3. Think of the first time you came to SU, what did you think about the place?
4. How did the PGIO help you? Please explain.
5. In your individual departments and faculties, do you find staff helpful to you as (a) newcomer(s)?

6. Was res management and staff helpful upon your arrival?
7. What do you find different about Stellenbosch culture compared to NUL culture?

PEDAGOGIC DOMAIN

8. In terms of your academic life at SU, what challenges did you encounter?
9. What caused those challenges? How did you overcome the challenges?
10. Explain to me how teaching and learning methods differ at SU from what you knew at NUL.
11. How does that affect your learning process?
12. What stands out for you in terms of teaching and learning?

SOCIAL DOMAIN

13. Tell me about your experience of moving into res. What were students like?
14. Are you part of any clubs/societies? Which one(s)? Why did you choose those particular ones?
15. What do you do for fun in Stellenbosch?
16. How do you experience the difference in social activities? What do you do about it?
17. What do you think about language at SU?
18. Of all the things we have discussed here today, what stands out for you?
19. Is there anything we have left out that you would like to include?

Thank you for taking part.

Appendix C: Consent Form



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (FOCUS GROUP)

TITLE: EXPLORING THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF LESOTHO POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY.

SUB-TITLE: postgraduate student participating in research

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Miss Mannini Kotele from the Department of Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University. The results of this research will bring insight on postgraduate students' educational experiences at the university. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a postgraduate student who studied for their undergraduate at the National University of Lesotho.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to understand and dig deeper into the educational and non-educational experiences of Lesotho students who are pursuing a postgraduate study at SU. Your participation in the study may benefit you and other postgraduate students from Lesotho who are studying at SU by helping to informing the university and Postgraduate Office of your experiences as you enter into the university, how you experience the university surrounding, and what your learning experiences are.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Provide your background information, personal and educational.
- Provide your experiences at Stellenbosch University.

- Be available for 1 one-on-one interview that will last approximately 40 minutes.
- Participate in a focus group that will last not more than 1 hour 30 minutes with other students who participated in the research.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

All interviews will take place at an agreed time and venue that suits the participant. Should any participant be unwilling to continue as part of the research process, they may withdraw at any point, without any penalty attached to their withdrawal. All data will be anonymous and pseudonyms will be used.

The questions asked are likely to evoke emotions of distress and trauma. If at any point, any of you experiences any form of discomfort, please inform the researcher. If after the focus group discussion you need professional help, please do not hesitate to contact the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD), where you can talk to a counsellor. The CSCD is at 31 Victoria Street, and their telephone number is 021 557 4707/021 808 4994.

4. BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The research will not benefit from the subject in any way, it will however inform and benefit the university on how international students encounter Stellenbosch University space. It will answer some questions that are sometimes not asked.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No payment will be made to any participant within the research.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of pseudonyms for all participants.

The data, both the recordings and transcriptions will be stored in a safe and secure location, one which only the researcher has access.

Only the researcher and participants will have access to the recordings and transcriptions, and once the research is complete, the recordings will be deleted.

Once the recordings are transcribed, the participant has a right to view the transcription to edit it if need be.

In publishing of the results, no name will be mentioned to protect the participants' right to privacy.

As the researcher vows to confidentiality, it is important that each participant respects the privacy of the other group members. Participants are asked not to disclose anything said within the context of the discussion.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher:

Miss Mannini Kotele

Tel: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT(S) OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to the participants by Miss Mannini Kotele in English and Sesotho. They were given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to his satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to participants. They were encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and Sesotho and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator

Appendix D: Permission from Research Ethics Committee



Approved with Stipulations New Application

10-Apr-2017

Kotele, Mannini MR

Proposal #: SU-HSD-003425

Title: Exploring the educational experiences of Lesotho postgraduate students at Stellenbosch University

Dear Miss Mannini Kotele,

Your **New Application** received on **03-Mar-2017**, was reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) via Committee Review procedures on **30-Mar-2017**.

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **30-Mar-2017 -29-Mar-**

2018 Present Committee Members:

De Villiers,
Mare MRH
Fouche,
Magdalena
MG
Hansen,
Leonard LD
Lambrechts
, Derica D
Hall, Susan
SLC
Graham,
Clarissa CJ
Toi, Jerall J
Williams,
Aden A
Prozesky,
Heidi HE
Rawlings,

Douglas
DE
Mariri,
Tendai T
Welman,
Karen KE
Khoza, Lindiwemhakamuni L

The following stipulations are relevant to the approval of your project and must be adhered to:

You may proceed with the envisaged research provided that the following stipulations, relevant to the approval of your project are adhered to or addressed. Some of these stipulations may require your response. Where a response is required, please respond to the REC within 30 days of the date of this letter. Your approval would expire automatically should your response not be received by the REC within 30 days of the date of this letter.

If a response is required, please respond to the points raised in a separate cover letter titled “Response to REC stipulations” AND if requested, HIGHLIGHT or use the TRACK CHANGES function to indicate corrections / amendments of ATTACHED DOCUMENTATION, to allow rapid scrutiny and appraisal.

1) PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

1.1) The researcher states that she will ask students personally whether they would be willing to participate in her study. It is not clear from the information provided as part of the application how this process will take place, or where/how she will access contact information of students, that will allow her to contact them. Clear and specific information about the recruitment process is required. She should also clarify how she will issue invitations for recruitment and if she requires any institutional support (e.g. from the International Office or Student Information Systems). [RESPONSE REQUIRED]

1.2) All interviews will be conducted in the common room of each participant's residence at a time convenient for the participant. The researcher must comment on her access to these common rooms, as well as the privacy for interviews to be conducted in these spaces. [RESPONSE REQUIRED]

1.3) The researcher mentions two data collection techniques: semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. It is not clear from her application when, with whom and how each of these data collection techniques will be utilised. In addition, it is not clear where the focus groups will take place. Clarity is required. [RESPONSE REQUIRED]

2. PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

2.1) The researcher intends to gather personal information which POPI classifies as special (and thus requiring stronger protections) (e.g. religious affiliation). The researcher should clarify her security procedures (but this can be done through the institutional permission process).

2.2) The researcher should also consider discussing focus group participant rights and responsibilities (as it pertains to the rights of the other participants) in the focus group consent form. [RESPONSE REQUIRED]

3. PROTECTION OF DATA, (BOTH PAPER AND ELECTRONIC)

Recordings and transcribed interviews will be stored in a safe. Please specify the location of this safe. No procedures for the storage of electronic data are provided. [RESPONSE REQUIRED]

4) INFORMED CONSENT AND ASSENT PROCESSES AND FORMS

The informed consent documentation is adequate and requires small changes. Two forms are provided and it is not clear which form will be used for the interviews and which will be used for the focus group discussions.

For the section requiring a description of the purpose of the study, the researcher has simply pasted her research aims as articulated in her proposal into this section. In preparation for the use of this form in the context of the study, she must rephrase this information by transforming it into simpler language.

5) ADEQUATE MITIGATION OF RISK; COUNSELLING SERVICES ETC?

The researcher states that the risk level associated with her research is low. However, it is more accurate to classify this project as medium risk research.

In exploring students' experiences of the institutional environment she will uncover varying experiences amongst participants, some of whom may not be coping well in the environment and who may be experiencing distress. She positions her argument for this research on the notion that the environment is culturally dissonant for participants who may be experience being othered in this context. Some students may, therefore, experience their participation as therapeutic, while others may experience sharing their experiences as distressing and re-traumatising. It is hard to predict. It is imperative that she outline clear steps for risk mitigation and support for students who experience distress by virtue of their participation in the interviews and focus groups. The answer may be simply that students will be referred to the Centre for Student Counselling for support. The researcher must comment explicitly and clearly on this point. [RESPONSE REQUIRED]

6) INSTRUMENTS (QUESTIONNAIRES, SCALES, INTERVIEW OUTLINES etc.)

6.1) The researcher provides two interview schedules: one for the semi-structured interviews and one for the focus group discussions. These schedules both contain questions that are aligned with the research objectives. However, in the interview guide the researcher asks specifically about experiences of racism on campus. It is not clear what the rationale behind the specific inclusion of this question is. If she is interested in exploring these kinds of institutional dynamics then one would wonder why she does not include experiences of sexism, and other axes of difference that serve as the foundation for discriminatory practices. [NO RESPONSE REQUIRED – FOR REFLECTION ONLY]

6.2) The interview guide provided for the semi-structured interviews is very long for the time proposed for each session. The researcher should redesign her schedule and/or consider increasing the number of interview sessions per participant. [NO RESPONSE REQUIRED – FOR REFLECTION ONLY]

7) OVERALL RISK LEVEL AND RISK /COST-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT

It is also not clear from the application how the research findings will be used. The researcher emphasises the importance of understanding these students' experiences, but does not state how this understanding will be utilised to provide support to students. This is particularly important given that this proposal is for a Masters in Education Policy Studies. Given these issues, the REC finds it difficult to make a reasonable assessment of the risk/cost-benefit associated with this research.

Please provide a letter of response to all the points raised IN ADDITION to HIGHLIGHTING or using the TRACK CHANGES function to indicate ALL the corrections/amendments of ALL DOCUMENTS clearly in order to allow rapid scrutiny and appraisal.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (SU-HSD-003425) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Included Documents:

DESC Report

REC: Humanities New Application

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator

Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2. Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your REC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.

3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4. Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur**. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouch within **five**

(5) days of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7. Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8. Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9. Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10. On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.